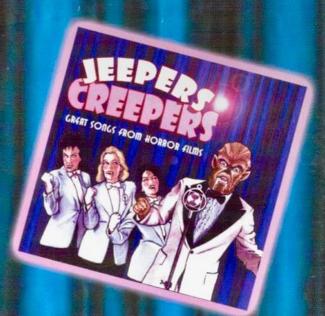




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COVER: Still Christopher Lee's most famous characterization—Count Dracula.

Scarlet Letters

Concerning Farnham Scott's article in Scarlet Street #51 (VAN HELSING: WHAT WENT WRONG?), I went to see VAN HEL-SING with a kind of what-the-hell attitude, knowing full well that even promising trailers are absolutely no indicator of quality. I went hoping for-and expecting-absolutely nothing. But (I shamefully admit) I still actually entertained the feeble and childish notion that this attitude could somehow put a reverse curse on the film and I might actually enjoy something about it. Well, I ask you: aside from yours truly, is there anyone out there so incredibly stoopid-headed as to yet hope that Hollywood will ever again deliver to Us True Monster-Lovers a film even vaguely evocative of the classics of the thirties and forties?

Key-rice! How much longer am I gonna have to pay movie prices to watch yet another goddamned Big Video Game? I mean, in the old days, crap usually meant that the studio had no money and/or no time and/or no talent to invest in their product. What's the excuse this time?

Okay, sure, sure-I understand that a lot has to do with how you were raised. Just like some people who came from families where everyone always ate okra, and they grew up to actually believe that okra is yum-yum-yum-alicious, and they simply cannot-nay, will not-see okra for what it really is, which is snot with seeds! Yes, just like these people, Dear Reditor, since I was raised on monster movies made at a time during which story meant something, characters meant something, atmosphere meant something, a faint semblance of believability meant something. I grew up to actually feel that VAN HEL-SING, LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN, and films of that ilk (to name only two), are all simply lowestcommon-denominator, computer-generated, trend-worshipping-committeemanufactured (dare I say it?) okra!

I'm up to here, Dear Ředitor! You hear me? I'm up to here! With all my heart (even the metal and plastic parts)...

Michael R. Thomas Belleville, NI

Now, now, Mike, remember the cheery philosophy of that wise old sage, Ygor—like lightning and a boiling hot sulphur pit, "VAN HELSING was good for you!"

Loved the new issue of *Scarlet Street*. Great layout, photos, and color. Still damned wonderful!

Dick Klemensen Little Shoppe of Horrors Des Moines, Iowa

And we loved the latest issue of the fabulous Little Shoppe of Horrors, especially the review by publisher Dick Klemensen that reads: "... for a complete collection of

in-depth interviews, news, overviews, and theme articles—just the whole package—plus a gorgeous look, SS is the best!"

Ran into your website tonite and love it! Also love seeing my name there, and to clarify: No, I did not compose the music for AN EVENING WITH BORIS KARLOFF AND HIS FRIENDS. Milt "Magic Castle" Larsen and I were cocreators of the album and also produced it. Forry Ackerman wrote the script. I had wanted Korla Pandit to do the score, but when our rep (Barney McDevitt) sold the album to Decca, the diskery's prez, Charles "Bud" Dant, named excellent composer/conductor William Loose to handle the score chores. (You can read the entire story about the album in my www.boxofmonsters.com interview.)

I have composed and performed a number of spook scores for Electric Lemon Records/CDs, now available on eBay and Amazon.com and iTunes and every place else, including MUSIC FOR ZOMBIES, THE PHANTOM OF THE ORGAN/VAMPYRE AT THE HARP-SICHORD, JOHN CARRADINE-POE WITH PIPES, HORRIFIC HALLOWEEN. and the as yet un-re-released MUSIC FOR MAGICIANS and DR. DRUID'S HAUNTED SEANCE (both due out in 2005). For anyone who may be a fan of my composition "Carnival of Souls, you can hear the words for the first time as I sing them on my new Dejavu Record Company release, "VERNE LANGDON-OUT OF LOVE.

Verne Langdon Los Angeles, CA

WANTED! MORE FRENCH SEX KITTENS LIKE...



Yvonne Monlaur



It's swell having Verne—who, in addition to his other many accomplishments, took over the Don Post Studio and created all those classic monster masks from the sixties—visit Scarlet Street! Stop by, anytime!

I've just finished listening to Richard Valley's commentary track on the DVD of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. Very interesting. Having been puzzled for over 40 years by the plot holes in the Mateo murder plot (Had Moriarty been plotting these interrelated crimes for 10 years? Nope!), I was very glad to have Mr. Valley finally clear that plot up. Thanks!

I have always wondered if Holmes' music-hall singer disguise was really Basil Rathbone at all, suspecting that someone else doubled Rathbone or at least did the singing for him. All of Rathbone's other disguises in his other Holmes films are always so transparent that it's clearly him, and the singing sounds so utterly unlike Rathbone. It was very interesting to learn from that it is indeed Rathbone. Relistening to his singing, yes, you can tell here and there, in a vowel or two, that it is Rathbone, but you must strain to hear it. He's been fooling me since about 1960, when I first saw this film. Thanks again!

Mr. Valley's reticence, however, in relating the background on wonderful George Zucco, robs those unacquainted with his life of the dramatic tale of his sad mental illness in his last decade, and also misses the opportunity to refute the over-the-top version of it related in Hollywood Babylon. In reading Gregory William Mank's account of Zucco's life in Hollywood's Maddest Doctors, what really struck me about Zucco's life was what a great love story it was. He and his wife were truly passionately devoted.

Douglas McÉwan Reseda, CA

It wasn't reticence, Douglas. (Oh, no, it wasn't reticence!) It was simply a lack of time dictated by the audio commentary format. It's something of a juggling act to provide background information and comment on the onscreen action at the same time. I'm happy to report, though, that my production notes and audio commentary for MPI Home Video's release of the Sherlock Holmes series starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce has resulted in my signing a contract with McFarland & Company to write a book on the

Continued on page 10



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-James Warren

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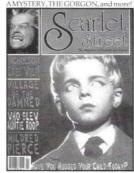
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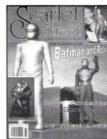
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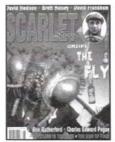
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#50: Debbie Reynolds, Julie Harris, Kate Phillips (Kay Linaker), The Great Charlie Chan Ban, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AUNT ALCE, NIGHT WARNING, FLESH FEAST, John Ireland on Joan Crawford, THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK, and more!



#51: THE BLOB, Kate Phillips (Kay Linaker), Van Helsing: The Man Who Slew Too Much, PETER PAN, Musicals and More, Twilight of the Horror Gods: James Whale and Tod Browning, and more!



#52: Patricia Morison, Peggy Webber, Van Helsing: The Man Who Slew Too Much, Hollywood Gothic Redux, Fay Wray Remembered, Mummy's the Word: Universal Horror Legacies, and more! "It's a great magazine and I especially love the way it's printed, on glossy paper and with so many color pages. Scarlet Street is classy all the way, easy to read—even for someone who's lived as long as I have—and very interesting in its choice of articles and interviews. Here's hoping for 50 more issues, at least!"

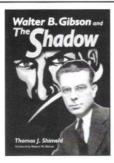
-Zacherley, the Cool Ghoul



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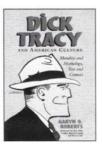


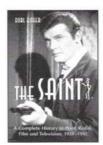
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

subject. Look for it in 2006, and you'll find considerably more info on The Great Zucco.

(×)

No surprise that the DVD collections of the Rathbone Holmes flicks are excellent, given *Scarlet Street's* obvious influence. Just one immediate question: What is the music behind the menu on each disc? Is it listed somewhere on the disc or box and I missed it?

Also, I just got Issue #51 in the mail. Congratulations and thanks for another terrific volume.

Maxwell Wiley New York, NY

We did our best to play NAME THAT TUNE, Maxwell, but according to MPI Home Video the mystery melody is a generic song purchased from a music company. Sorry, but MPI had no further info. We can tell you with a degree of certainty, however, that it isn't "Melancholy Baby."

 \geq

With the debut of #51, Scarlet Street is to be congratulated for another fine issue. Among the always solid roster of DVD reviews, I read with great interest Ken Hanke's review of MGM's new CHANTHOLOGY, (one hopes that Fox will now get with the program in regard to their Chan holdings), as well as David Morrill's look at MPI's latest SHERLOCK HOLMES COLLECTION. Farnham Scott and Richard Valley's survev of the screen's various Van Helsings was a deft, thorough history-and of course timely in light of Universal's recent release (which I've yet to see, for better or worse). Plaudits go to Erich Kuersten for providing a deep examination not only of THE BLOB (which, I will admit, scared me as a tot), but also Larry Hagman's sequel and the 1988 remake, while Leonard J. Kohl provided a conclusion to his Kate Phillips/Kay Linaker interview that didn't disappoint. Imagining her starring alongside Bela Lugosi in a production of LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER—yes, my friends, that's the stuff dreams are made of.

Earl Roesel Newport, KY

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I've read a couple of other interviews with Kate Phillips in other magazines, but they pale compared to the comprehensive interview conducted by Leonard J. Kohl for Scarlet Street. Praise for Scarlet Street's sterling interviews may sometimes get lost in the accolades and kudos properly bestowed on your writers, but I'm here to say nobody does it better when it comes to giving the complete picture of an artist's life and career. And count on Scarlet Street to gild the lily by offering a thoughtful critical analysis (in this case, by Ken Hanke) of the revelations revealed in the interview proper. Keep the fine work coming!

Bill Drinkwater Jacksonville, FL

><

Well, naturally, having half a byline on the cover article (Scarlet Street #51), I immediately checked to see how I fared under the knife of Reditor. Delightfully, even though our takes on a couple of the key films in the Van Helsing Saga are different, I think we meshed pretty well—and the captions on the colorful stills are so Ackermanesque I was whisked away to those memorable Famous Monsters years, those days of racing home with the treasured issue to wallow in the tantalizing stills and discover new films to search out and explore. I guess some things never change.

But how can I describe the thrill (this is one of the first pieces I've ever had published) of having Forry Ackerman do the side bar on Edward Van Sloan? I was once in a movie and the article on it was published next to a photograph of Peter Cushing in the New York Daily News. That was a thrill—but having 4SJ himself printed next to an article in which I participated? It's like some wonderful dream come true!

I quickly gobbled down the DVD reviews: Ron Morgan and Ross Care encourage me to grab up both MAURICE and ALICE IN WONDERLAND. (Hmm, now there's a double-bill for you!) All those extras demand purchase! The display, the pix, the layout are all up to Scarlet Street's customary high standards and again with the pieces cross-feeding each other (i.e., Linaker to Chan to Blob; the Van Helsing piece avec the Legacy Collection review avec 4E's column) gives the issue a nice symmetry. The combo of the black-and-white Lugosi pic with the bold red Scarlet banner recalls the early SS days. I still miss the more antique lettering, true, but there's no denying you can see this logo across the room as you near the magazine racks.

I had a great conversation with Zacherley the other day. I had meant to call him with birthday greetings, but he saw my name on the Van Helsing piece and gave me a call. I thought I'd let you know that Zach really likes the magazine. He told me that he thought it had a great look to it. He particularly mentioned that he enjoyed the text superimposed over the photographs, and that it was still easily read.

His ZACHERLEY ARCHIVE video is being transferred to DVD and, as an added feature, it will show some of the treats, statues, and memorabilia that he has kept and that fans have sent him over the years. On the album front, SPOOK ALONG WITH ZACHERLEY's original master tapes have been found and a CD is now available, which is great since I always thought it was the best recording he did.

Getting to see the great 4SJ write a sidebar to our article, getting phoned by Zach from out of the blue (well, Manhattan, anyway)—it's like coming round full circle to those wonderful early Famous Monsters days. The Scarlet Street runs through our early dreams and brings that kind of joy into the reality of present day, which is to say it's one kick-ass magazine.

Farnham Scott Temperance, MI





 \triangleright

I just wanted to write and thank you for being so good to Uncle Forry and giving the people who love FJA a forum to talk about him. What a great guy! I got to speak with Forry for 15 minutes (just me and him) at the Monster Bash. He was a little hard of hearing, but sharp as ever! I hope you don't mind me writing; I'm not very good at it. Just wanted to say, "Thanks!" You really are one of the good guys

Oh, and I just read Scarlet Street #50.

Loved it!

Steve (No Last Name Given)

Edinburg, VA

Thanx for the thanx, Steve! Those who want to discuss Forrest J Ackerman and All Things Scarlet are invited to join us at www.scarletstreet.com.

Glad Forry Ackerman is doing well. Have known him since 1965. Last saw him after his wife's death in 1990. Moved to Oregon shortly after that, so I haven't had much contact. A tragedy occurred when he couldn't house his collection. Everyone let him down, including George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Only John Landis and Ray Bradbury really stuck by him. I really wonder what he kept out of his collection and who got the other stuff. What a museum it would have made!

Love Scarlet Street! I'm still debating whether to splurge on Scarlet Streets #4 and #5, as I have all the rest in the series. I just turned 71; I don't have too much time left to decide!

Alan Grossman

Florence, OR

Splurge, Alan! Splurge! Splurge till the cows come home . . .

Every issue of Scarlet Street is welcomed at my home like an old friend. I appreciate and admire your in-depth coverage and journalistic dedication. However, I would like to disabuse you of a persistent rumor printed in the Frankly Scarlet editorial of Issue #51.

Various credible sources (including Merian C. Cooper) stated that KING KONG's infamous Spider Pit sequence was indeed filmed. It remained in the picture, in fact, during a handful of test screenings until it was ultimately cut from the general release print in 1933. Ray Bradbury, who attended such a screening, may be the only person alive

who has seen the footage.

According to Cooper himself, he had the negative destroyed—sadly, a common practice at the time. The producer felt that the sequence was so jaw-dropping that it killed the pace of the picture, momentarily taking the audience out of their emotional involvement with the Ann Darrow character. Willis O'Brien considered the scene one of his very best, and was heartbroken over its loss. (O'Brien's sculptor Marcel Delgado confirmed that the sequence was both executed and excised.)



Attached you will find one of the few still shots that have survived. It's actually an exposure test, not a frame blowup. The story behind these intriguing pictures-and more importantly, the amazing life of the pioneering animator-inspired me to make a feature length documentary called CREATION: THE LOST WORLDS OF WILLIS O'BRIEN. The piece is very close to completion.

Keep up the fine deductive work on Scarlet Street.

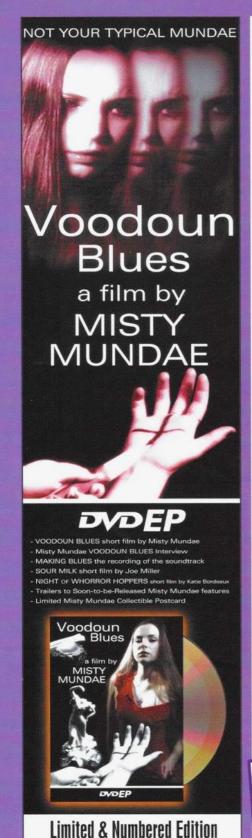
Steven L. Austin

Galt's Gulch Productions

Van Nuys, CA

Oops! Well, like I said in the column, you can never be too sure what you actually remember and what you only think you remember. Thanx for the correction!

Continued on page 18



Frankly Scarlet

y claim the camera adds 10 ounds, so these phote summer's fabulous st have been taken with two cams. I'm fighting he Bulge, but even so I decided treeters took in being presented eal hand-though that would cerainly serve to make the award ex remely rare), with a representation pelow, Man Aging Editor Tom Amor-

Scarlet Street's 4E Award was pre-sented at Forry's birthday party last year, which we were unable to at-Carloffornia for the Big Event, and 'll have a full report next issue. Meanwhile, Forry has a few words

Never let it be said that I'm unwilling to tell a joke or story on myself. It may be true, but never let it be atricia Morison, known 'round Broadway as the shimmering star of the original production of Cole Porter's KISS ME KATE (1948), one better known 'round *Scarlet Street* as the star of CALLING DR. DEATH 1943), DRESSED TO KILL (1946),

After conducting the interview and hope) making a new friend, I





a fit of laughter, I don't know.) interview," Dan gasped between chorchortles, I don't know.) "Do you have any idea what you said?" Well, I And then he played it for me. And

dote about the filming of TARZAN panzee playing Cheta began acting props, and extras all over RKO's backstage jungle. I listened attentively, laughed at the images Pat can be very nasty, those chipmunks.

course, but I opened my yap and a

Pat, bless her, went right on with went right on with the interview

You'll find my interview with Patsue. What you won't find is any reference to chipmunks. Here at ments given by our interviewees but Pat didn't say "chipmunks

Richard

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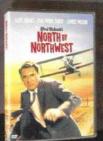
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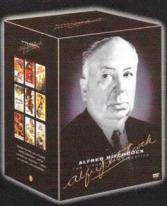


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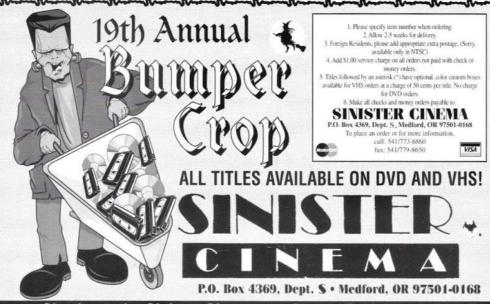








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The Strange Vengeance of Rosalie

SWEET VENGEANCE OF ROSALIE* (1973) Bonnie Bedelia, Ken Howard, Anthony Zerbe. Wow...this could be the best film in this year's releases. Howard picks up a young, quirky (and very pretty) vagabond woman in the desert. She tricks him into taking her to her desert shack where she breaks his leg with the blunt end of an axel. After that it's very much like the Cathy Bates—James Caan relationship from Stephen King's Misery. In fact, the story is so similar one might wonder if this was King's original inspiration. This is a great movie for what it is, with outstanding performances by all. Bedelia is particularly wonderful as the burlap-dressed psycho sweetie whom Howard knows is dangerous yet finds strangely irresistible. The scene where Bedelia is pumping up a tire in her bikini underwear is a gem. There are some wonderful exchanges between her and Howard. Zerbe is great as the psychomotorcycle dude who comes calling. This one holds your interest from staft to finish. Probably the best psycho horor film we've seen since The Sadist. Our highest recommendation. From a nice color 16mm print. DVD item #H334D, VHS item #H334

NIGHT NURSE* (1977) Davina Whitehouse, Kay Taylor, Gary Day, Kate Fitzpatrick. A nice, creepy Euro-horror film that hasn't been around all that much. The movie opens with an art professional being brutally murdered by a house mistress in an erie mansion where a crippled old opera star resides. A new night nurse is hired (what happened to the previous ones?) and she soon arrives to take care of the aging singer. She is initially unaware of the sinister forces that surround her but soon discovers that there is something strange about her new place of work. Is the house haunted? Watch and find out Pretty good chills sprinkled throughout. Color, 16mm. DVD item #H338D, VHS item #H338

Married Marrid Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married

THE MAN FROM 1997* (1956 aka BOOK FROM THE FUTURE) Jacques Cernas, Gloria Talbot, James Garner, Charlie Ruggles. Here is an amazing sci-fi rarity. Cernas is an immigrant who falls for Talbot. Gloria's out for a rich guy, though. However, when Cernas buys an almanac from 1997, his life changes. How did the book get into the bookseller's hands? Cernas, who is now able to look into the future, bets on a horse race. Sure enough, his horse takes first, but his win at the track puts him under the eye of gangsters who smell something fishy. Things get bizarre when the book's owner. Ruggles, comes back from the future to reclaim it! Cernas and Talbot are great. A fantastic, interesting premise with a little bit of humor thrown in. A nice, sometimes creepy music score. Highly Recommended. Approx 50 minutes. Also: THE SHINING FUTURE (1944, Warners) Charlie Ruggles, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosy. Here is an odd short subject that also stars Ruggles as a man from the future. Charlie and his friends look at the past through their futuristic TV. They watch Frank, Bing and other big stars perform. Cool. 16mm. DVD item #S246D, VHS item #S246

SANDOKAN, PIRATE OF MALAYSIA* (1964, aka PIRATES OF THE SEVEN SEAS) Steve Reeves, Jacqueline Sassard, Mimmo Palmara, Andrea Bosic. One of the best Steve Reeves movies we've ever seen! A ruthless British general tries to force a good king to resign his throne in favor of English rule. Sandokan and his comrades intervene. Some truly great action moments follow! In particular, watch for the scene where a gang of rebels is viciously attacked by a band of wild-eyed natives. Another tense moment has a prisoner about to be thrown into the jaws of an alligator. Reeves made a pair of Sandokan films, and this may be the better of the two. Shot on location in Singapore. A must for all Reeves fans. Recommended for sure. Color, 16mm. DVD item #SS133D, VHS item #SS133D.

THE VAMPIRES* (1963) Gordon Scott, Gianna Marie Canale, Jacques Cernas. The mighty Goliath is pitted against the evil Kobrak, a particularly vicious vampire who threatens the life of his sweetheart (can't have that). Kobrak has the added advantage of having an army of faceless robots at his beck and call, most of who are his previous victims. A lot of dark, eerie scenes help add to the film's creepy atmosphere. One of Scott's best sword and sandal epics. Released stateside by AIP. Definitely recommended. Color from 16mm DVD time #SS65D UHS item #SS65

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TERMINAL ISLAND* (1974) Ena Hartman, Tom Selleck, Barbara Leigh, Don Marshall, Phyllis Davis. Terminal Island is an open prison island where the criminals run free and are so bad they've been declared legally dead by the feds. The population is mostly hardened killers and thugs, the majority of whom are men. However there are a few women, most of whom are busty, lusty, tough, seductive babes. What follows is a study in violence, sex, degravity, and even a little ferminism thrown in for good measure *Terminal Island* will probably rank right up there with Common-law Wife and Shang's Tramp as our most popular exploitation films. It's an absolute must-see for all exploitation fans. The traiter is a gern and is worth the price of admission alone. Selleck later become a huge star, and Davis went on to be a regular on *The Love Boat* Gee, how do you think they feel about this movie now? Our highest possible recommendation. Rated R for rudity, language, and violence. Color, From 35mm. DVD Item #X112D, VHS Item #X112.

THE JACKALS* (1967) Vincent Price, Dana Iverson, Robert

violence. Color, From 35mm. DVD item #X112D, VHS item #X112

THE JACKALS* (1967) Vincent Price, Dana Iverson, Robert
Gunnar, Bob Courtnet, Johnny Whitney. Here's something you
don't see too often, a Euro-style western shot in Africa. The plot
concerns the 1883 gold rush in South Africa's Transvala region. A
gang of outlaws is trying to steal gold from an aging prospector and
his granddaughter. This film features a great script, fine acting, lots
of action, and beautiful cinematography. Price steals the show as
the crotchety old prospector. A very good movie that is a nice
reworking of the Yellow Sky story line. Not sure, but we don't think
this one has ever been on video before. Recommended. Color,
18mm. DVD item #SW36D, VHS item #SW36



A WALKING NIGHTMARE* (1942) James Dunn, Joan Woodbury, Paul McVey, Gus Glassmire. Academy Award winner Dunn plays a smooth-talking reporter who is given the assignment of tracking down and rescuing a wealthy kidnap victim. The victim turns up alive but with a bad case of brain damage. Is it really brain damage, though? Could it be that he's been changed into a zombie! Dunn and his gai pal try to figure out what's going on. They soon end up tramping through a spooky old house. Good fun. From 16mm. DVD item #H329D, VHS item #H329

HOUSE OF DREAMS* (circa 1963) Pauline Elliott. Robert Barry, Lance Bird. We picked up this ultra-obscure horror film years ago and can't even remember where we got it. It must have had a theatrical release because our source material was 35mm How is it you ask? Really, really, really bad. This may be the lowest budget film we offer. Barry is not only the star, but the writer, producer, and director. We have to give him credit for trying, but the film is so awful it's just amazing. Barry is a writer with writer's block. He has eerie dreams about an abandoned house, which he's actually using for the setting in his latest story. He sees visions of his own body down a well shaft near the house, then he sees his wife hanging from a noose. When his wife actually hangs herself, he drives to the house to meet his fate. There are long sequences of Barry wandering around the old place, seeing visions of horror, but these sequences seem endless. There is a sinister organ music score like Carnival of Souls, but it is so blaring you feel like your eardrums are being attacked. Argh! The dialogue scenes are long, long, long. The one good thing is that the actual house is a very spooky looking joint. If you can get all the way through the 69 minutes of House of Dreams in one sitting, you'll owe yourself a big slap on the back. Any student of bad movies needs to subject himself to this. Look out! You've made me spill my coffee! From 35mm DVD them #H3310, VHS term #H331.

THE THREE WEIRD SISTERS* (1948) Nancy Price, Mary Clare, Anthony Hulme, Mary Merrall. A sinister movie—very gothic and very atmospheric. An old dark house is the setting in this thriller that comes complete with a diabolical murder plot and three crippled sisters. You don't want to miss this very atmospheric British production, which features a really cool ending. Originally mastered from William K. Everson's old 16mm print. Mucho recommended. 16mm. DVD Item #H025D, VHS Item #H025



SCHOOL OF DEATH (1977) Dean Selmier, Sandra Mozaroski, Victoria Vera. An 1899 London orphanage is the setting for this weird tale. There is a really cool looking monster-quy doing weird experiments on an attractive young woman. He's actually a fire-scarred mad doctor who subjects his beautiful victim to memory-draining surgery, turning her into a zombie. She eventually dies, but like in all good horror movies she's soon seem walking around again. Who is this mad doctor and what does he want? All things considered, this is a good old-fashioned horror movie that's very atmospheric and entertaining. A very good Eurohorror film. Color, 16mm. DVD item #H3399, UNS item #H3399.

MURDER IS NEWS* (1937, Warwick) John Gallaudet, Iris Meredith, George McKay, Doris Lloyd, John Hamilton. A great little whodunit. Radio columnist Jerry Tracy (Gallaudet) heads out to meet with a big industrialist who plans to break in on a clandestine meeting between his attorney and his wife. However, when he arrives, Tracy finds the body of the industrialist—murdered! He is then knocked cold. When he awakens, the body of the murdered man has vanished! What happened to the body and who is the killer? Tracy tries to find the answers. This is our own pick for the best poverty row mystery-crime film of this year's new release batch—The Gold Racket would have to be a close second. Recommended. 16mm. DVD item #M358D. VHS item #M358

THE SPIDER* (1931) Edmund Lowe, Lois Moran, El Brendel, John Arledge, George E. Stone. In a precursor to Chandu the Magician, Lowe plays Chatrand the Great, a magician with great hypnotic and magical powers. During his evening performance at an upscale theatter, a murder occurs. A hand wearing a sinister spider ring raises a revolver, the lights go out, and a shot rings out! When the lights come on, the body of a patron is lying on the floor, dying. Who is the mysterious killer? What is the strange secret of Lowe's clairvoyant, amnesia-plagued assistant? After the police restrain the audience from leaving, Lowe uses his magical powers to help expose the killer. Watch for the terrific séance scene where weird ghost-like creatures float above the stage. This terrific William Cameron Menzies film features some fabulous black and white cinematography. Fortunately, Brendel's comic relief isn't too annoying. Some truly great on-stage magic tricks. Watch for Ward Bond in a small role as a cop. An absolute must for all 1930s horror and mystery fans. 16mm. DVD item #H327D, VHS item #H327



THE GOLD RACKET* (1937, Grand National) Conrad Nagel, Eleanor Hunt, Fuzzy Knight, Warner Richmond, Charles Delaney. A nice little crime thriller about a criminal ring that smuggles low-priced gold from Mexico into the United States to be sold at higher prices. However, when they kill a federal agent, Nagel is called in to investigate. The trail leads Conrad to Mexico where he finds the smuggler's pilot hanging out at Fuzzy's café. The final shootout takes place in cool-looking underground lair that almost looks like the inside of an old castle. Richmond is great as one of the heavies. This was the third teaming of Nagel and Hunt. A lot of fun. From 16mm. DVD Item #H357D, VHS Item #H357

THE MAGNETIC MONSTER* (1953) Richard Carlson, King Donovan, Jean Byron, Harry Ellerbe, Leo Britt, Byron Foulger. A lone wolf nuclear scientist invents a new magnetic element that draws energy from everything around it. Unless stopped, it will eventually grow and grow until it destroys the earth! Great special effects for its time. Literate, engrossing—an all around jewel of a movie. Easily one of the best sci-fi films of the early '50s. Highly recommended. From 16mm. DVD item #S009D, VHS item #S009

QUEEN OF THE NILE* (1962) Jeanne Crain, Vincent Price, Edmund Purdom, Amedeo Nazzari. Here is a quality sword and sandal epic with a great cast that has been overlooked for years. Crain plays the stunning Egyptian beauty, Nefertiti. Purdom desires her but is foiled at every turn by an evil high priest who twice imprisons him. She eventually marries the Pharaoh and after his death becomes the queen of all Egypt. The high priest then attempts a military takeover! Some good action scenes follow. Price is most convincing as the vile high priest. Lots of excitement and court intrigue in this fine sword and sandal thriller. Nice color. 16mm. DVD item #SS131D, VHS item #SS131D.

BANG, YOU'RE DEAD* (1965) Brett Halsey. Dana Andrews, Pier Angeli, Tanya Beryl. What a great idea for a spy movie. Andrews plays an American agent who has a tiny camera implanted in his eye so the guys back at Soviet HQ can see what's he's doing. Both sides are in a race to recover the lost plans to a powerful laser death ray, which was developed by a murdered American scientist. His daughter may well be the key to the location of the secret plans. Released here as "Spy in Your Eye." Color. 16mm DVD item #H310D. URS item #H310.



mary, mary, **Bloody Mary**

MARY, MARY, BLOODY MARY* (1976) Cristina Farrare, David Young, John Carradine, Helena Rojo. This is a pretty weird movie. Ferrare is a really good-looking gal who seems perfectly normal during the first minutes of the film. Then she starts killing people and drinking their blood. It's not a pretty sight. To top it off, she's bisexual and seems to show no deference to the sex of her victims. She is stalked by a weird character who turns out to be her Dad, played by Carradine. He, too, is a bloodsucking vampire. There is nudity and Lesbian elements that make this an Rated R affair, so steer the kids clear. A flawed film, yet it seems to hold your interest. Color, filmm DVD item #H336D, VHS item #H336

BEFORE DAWN* (1933) Warner Oland, Dorothy Wilson, Stuart Erwin, Dudley Digges, Frank Reicher. A great old dark house chiller. A woman falls down a staircase to her death after seeing the ghost of a dead gangster who has hidden a million dollars in stolen loot somewhere within her creepy estate. A cast of strange characters arrives, all in search of the ill-gotten money. Erwin is the detective who investigates the weird goings-on. Wilson plays a beautiful psychic who has seen a vision of the old woman's death. Oland, however, steals the show as the mysterious doctor whose motives and mere presence within the house are extremely questionable. Oland should have made more movies like this. Watch for the "secret well shaft" scene, it's an eye-opener. All kinds of great mysterious stuff that you'd expect in a movie like this. Highly recommended. 16mm. DVD Item #H328D, VHS Item #H328

MANHATTAN NIGHT OF MURDER* (1966) George Nader, Heinz Weiss, Monika Grimm, Peter Kuiper. A ring of gangsters has been terrorizing New York City. Special agent Jerry Cotton is summoned by the FBI to help crack down on the Criminals and put them out of business. He doesn't pull any punches either. Nader made a series of Jerry Cotton films, but they are very obscure and not readily available. In fact, we believe it's possible this may be the first video release of any of the Cotton titles. If this film is any indication, it must have been a pretty good series. From 16mm. DVD item #M363D, VHS item #M363

STORM OVER BENGAL* (1938) Patric Knowles, Richard Cromwell, Rochelle Hudson, Douglass Dumbrille. A great action film set in India that leaves you wanting more. Knowles is a tough British captain who tries to warn a dying maharajah about a plot by the evil Ramin Kahn (played to the hilt by Dumbrille) to overthrow British troops in the region. Knowles and Cromwell are feuding brothers vying for the affections of the lovely Hudson, who is supposed to marry Cromwell, but has secret affections for Knowles. This is a slick, well-made adventure thriller with great action and intrigue throughout. Watch for the eye-pooping scene where Cromwell crashes his plane into a rocky canyon in front of advancing rebel troops. Cool. Outstanding Lone Pine locations. Mucho recommended. 16mm. DVD item #AA41D, VHS item #AA41

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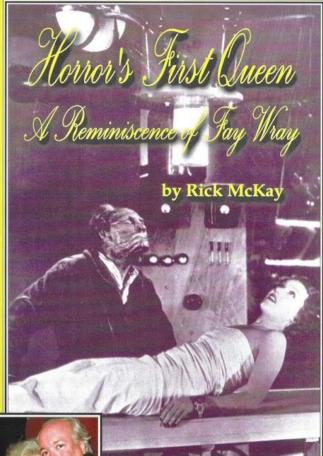
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At Fay Wray's memorial service, held at New York City's Film Forum movie theater on September 26. I told the audience that Fav and I would sometimes drive seven hours to New Hampshire to see her actress daughter, Susan Riskin, perform on stage. After the service, a young writer from The New York Times interviewed me, wanting to know what in the world Fav and I would talk about during a seven-hour drive. I tried to explain to him that Fay was not the archetypal "old movie star." Her original dream had been to work as a writer, but due to her incredible beauty and her legendary chemistry with the camera, she had been sidetracked by Hollywood. Those long drives were like conversations with any young writer with a fertile mind. Her intellectual curiosity was amazing.

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I learned a lot about film from Fay, but I also learned a lot about life and the aging process. A few years ago, I took Fay to her granddaughter's wedding. I had not been able to go to the rehearsal dinner with Fay and on the way to the wedding I asked Fay how it had gone. She told me that the best man had made a very long speech that everyone thought was very funny. I asked Fay if she had been able to hear it all right, knowing that her hearing had been getting worse and worse. "Not a word!" she replied, laughing. I asked her if that was difficult for her and if she found a long speech she couldn't hear boring or frustrating. "Oh, no, not at all!" she replied, looking at me with eyes sparking with excitement. "As I sat and listened. I went around the table and studied each person and wondered who they were, what was going on in each of their minds, and what in their lives had brought them there that day."

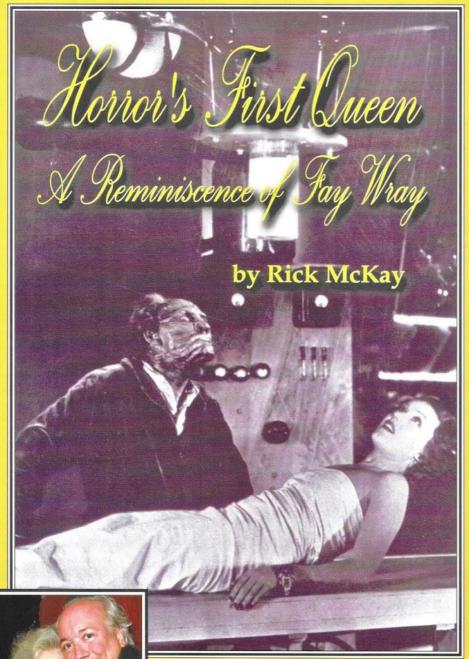
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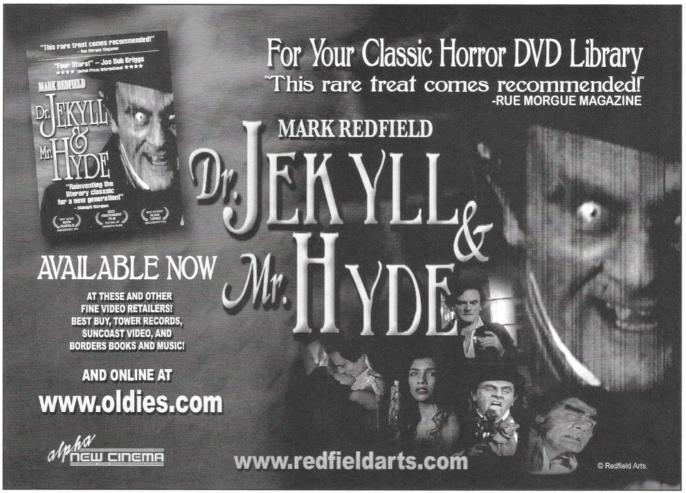
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SCARLET LETTERS Continued from page 11

I really enjoyed the Frankly Scarlet piece in Scarlet Street #51 about a great horror mag "discovery" and I enjoyed Farnham Scott's pieces on PETER PAN and the recent movie, VAN HELSING. I also loved the second part of Leonard Kohl's interview with Kate Phillips/Kay Linaker. I read all of the letters, too; they're always very interesting. And then

I got into the DVD reviews:

I enjoyed Anthony Dale's review of YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES—what a shame that this film didn't succeed at the box-office and so, of course, could not bring forth a sequel. I would've really enjoyed a sequel and I loved those kids, Nicholas Rowe and Alex Cox. I was interested in Robin Anderson's comments on STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING, which is a film that I have always wanted to see (although Robin didn't like it much). I was also very interested in Robin's review of MYRA BRECKINRIDGE-if only they'd had the courage to have been faithful to Gore Vidal's great and unique original novel! Kevin G. Shinnick gave me such a great time with his reviews of WEREWOLF IN A GIRLS' DORMITORY and THE MONSTER CLUB. I got quite a kick out of Jim Hollifield's very informative reviews of the two great Disney lunatic comedies, THE ABSENT MINDED PROFESSOR and SON OF FLUBBER. And I agree, Jim,

that they should only be seen in their original black-and-white format. I also was interested in Jim Thompson's remarks about KING OF THE ZOM-BIES— and to think that it's available for so little from Alpha Video! I heap lavish praise on Ron Morgan's reviews of those two superb Merchant and Ivory productions—A ROOM WITH A VIEW and MAURICE, and I throw a bouquet of roses to Barry Monush for taking the time to bestow such appreciation on THE EDDY DUCHIN STORY, which is a film that I have always loved. I thoroughly enjoyed Paula Vitaris' review of NERÓ WOLFE and Tom Soter's review of PE-TER GUNN-and, of course, I just loved what our one-and-only John F. Black had to say about BACK TO THE BEACH. Why, he even mentioned the actor John Calvin, who, I hope, is still acting somewhere!

In his obituaries list in Scarlet Street #49, The News Hound mentions the death of the famed playwright/screen-writer, George Axelrod, who became famous for his three plays—THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH, WILL SUCCESS SPOIL ROCK HUNTER?, and GOODBYE CHARLIE—but ended up very unhappy with all three screen versions, especially THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH. He and Billy Wilder had written the film adaptation together, but encountered terrible problems with The Breen Office and The

Legion of Decency.

During his short but dazzling reign in Hollywood, Axelrod did some brilliant adaptations of other people's work, though, and perhaps none is more fondly remembered than his adaptation of Truman Capote's novella, Breakfast at Tiffany's, filmed by Blake Edwards. At first, he and Joshua Logan, who had worked with Axelrod so memorably on the screen version of William Inge's BUS STOP, wanted to tackle BREAK-FAST AT TIFFANY'S as their next project together, but they couldn't figure out a way to bring the material to the screen and certainly couldn't use the novella's own structure-that of a gay man's experience with a sexy, kooky lady. Finally, the producer, Martin Jurow, announced his plans to bring BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S to the big screen, but he didn't want anything to do with Axelrod, because he associated Axelrod with Jayne Mansfield. (Jurow had directed her first screen test and sold her contract to 20th Century Fox.) Axelrod persisted in his desire to write the screenplay and managed to get hired for the job. He actually developed the film adaptation with—of all people-John Frankenheimer, who was slated to direct the film, and finally found a way to satisfy the studio's demand for a love story—the girl and a newly-invented boy would both be in "the same line of work" and totally unable to afford each other.

When Audrey Hepburn became the star of the film, she did not want to work with Frankenheimer, but was quite willing to work with Edwards. Edwards came onto the film very late in its development and didn't even have the time to touch a line of dialogue. Axelrod was never satisfied with Edwards' direction of his screenplay, because he felt that Edwards missed out on "the high comedy concept" of the material. And he took a really violent objection to Mickey Rooney's participation in the film and even tried to refilm Rooney's last scene, in which he becomes directly involved in the plot. Even Hepburn had made herself available for three days of unpaid work, but Edwards stepped in and prevented the reshooting.

Still, Axelrod was never entirely dismissive of the results, He admitted to a basically happy collaboration with Edwards and the existence of some lovely things in the picture. And, of course, he captured his sole Oscar nomination for writing the screenplay. Perhaps the fact that BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S had initially originated with his creative partnership with Logan and then was later developed with Frankenheimer blinded him to the captivating charm of Edwards' direction.

Raymond Banacki Brooklyn, NY

500

I received my copy of Scarlet Street #50 in the mail yesterday. You have certainly outdone yourself this time with

this gorgeous anniversary issue. May I add my congratulations to the stack of kudos?

I now have a morbid desire to view FLESH FEAST. Its alternate title was even more appropriate—TIME IS TER-ROR, because it's quite terrifying to see what time did to Veronica Lake's looks. Although 51 is not really that old, Ms. Lake was hit with the triple whammy of poverty, alcoholism, and untreated schizophrenia, which would account for her premature aging. After losing all her money, she worked as a barmaid and ended up on skid row. No surprise, then, that Ms. Lake bore such a ravaged appearance (especially her decayed teeth) and died middle-aged. I believe she was "rediscovered" by an agent who found her working in some crummy bar. That encounter led to her 'comeback" vehicle—FLESH FEAST.

I love what you did with the John Ireland memoir. I will soon be chatting with Daphne Ireland and expect that she will be enormously pleased as well.

Harvey F. Chartrand Ottowa, Canada

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I read Richard Valley's review of *Truth, Justice & The American Way,* so I picked up a copy of the book. It's a satisfactory bio about Noel Neill, a very easy read filled with lots of photos. Interesting, though not juicy enough. Larry Ward writes about Ms. Neill's career as if it was a press release. Do you mean to tell me that from 1937 to 2002 there is noth-

ing to dish? Come on—she was a dancer, a night club singer, and, of course, a Hollywood film and TV actress. In 65 years, not a single tidbit—I find that sad.

Christine Domaniecki Belleville, NI

∞

The conclusion of the Kate Phillips in Scarlet Street #51 is a great read (as was the first part). A nice in-depth interview that just goes to show how easily assumptions about certain "facts" from classic Hollywood can be dispelled just by asking the right people. (Ken Hank's sidebar on this points it out very eloquently.) Len Kohl sure knows how to conduct his interviews.

Also, kudos to Erich Kuersten on his BLOB article. That's one movie I've always enjoyed, but never pondered on a more serious level. Another fine example that there are new things to be said about these classic films.

Ron Morgan Toledo, OH

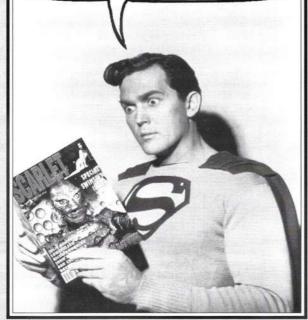
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the HOUND

Follow The Hound's trail (that's trail, not tail) as he tracks down the latest entertainment headlines for you adventurous Scarlet Streeters. Forward, friends and fiends . . .

Theatrical Thrills

Michael Keaton portrays a man who believes he hears his dead wife speaking to him amidst audio static in the supernatural thriller WHITE NOISE (Universal), opening in theaters in January. Veteran UK television director Geoffrey Sax (DOCTOR WHO: THE MOVIE) makes his feature debut with this tale based on the purported psychic occurrence of EVP (electronic voice phenomena) where metaphysical researchers believe voices from beyond the grave can be heard within radio and TV static—providing much more entertainment than 90% of the crap currently on the airwaves

Robert DeNiro is a widower troubled by his nine-year-old daughter's creepy imaginary playmate in the 20th Century Fox thriller HIDE AND SEEK. (Playing patty-cake with daddy De-Niro would have its own creep factor.) Famke Janssen, Amy Irving, and tykeof-the-moment Dakota Fanning (of Sci-Fi Channel's TAKEN) costar under John Polson's (SWIMFAN) direction.

Also debuting in January: the Marvel superhero actioner ELEKTRA (20th Century Fox), featuring Jennifer Garner reprising her role from 2003's DARE-DEVIL opposite Ben Affleck (who reportedly cameos as Matt Murdock/ Daredevil), and Focus Features' remake of John Carpenter's 1976 debut feature ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13, starring Laurence Fishburne, Ethan Hawke, and Maria Bello.

Upcoming Attractions

A young man is compelled to return to his former homestead to face the haunting fear of a presence that lurked within his childhood bedroom. Was it his imagination, or a horrifyingly real creature? Or are those scary-ass Teletubbies taking their toll? Screen Gems' February feature BOOGEYMAN answers these fateful questions. Barry Watson (of TV's 7th HEAVEN stars), along with erstwhile warrior princess Lucy Lawless.

Also on view in February is the Warner Bros. fantasy suspenser CONSTANTINE, based on the Vertigo/DC Comics title Hellblazer. Keanu Reeves stars as paranormal gumshoe John Constantine, who must face his demons-literally-while aiding police detective Rachel Weisz in the investigation of the mysterious death of her twin sister. Costarring are Djimon Hounsou, Tilda Swinton, and

the terrific, jittery-eved character actor Pruitt Taylor Vince.

Other features set for a February bow include the Hitchcockian thriller THE INTERPRETER (Universal) from director Sidney Pollack, starring Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn; and SON OF THE MASK (New Line Cinema), with SCREAM's Jamie Kennedy taking over Jim Carrey's green guise.

Déjà Views

The Warner Bros./Dark Castle remake of HOUSE OF WAX, originally scheduled for Halloween 2004, has been pushed back to an April 2005 slot, where it competes with another horror retread-Michael Bay's production of THE



Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson (Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock) are back on the case via DVDs from the BBC.

AMITYVILLE HORROR for MGM, AM-ITYVILLE's cast includes is young Aussie actress Melissa George, who's being talked up as the new SUPERGIRL . BATMAN BEGINS-Warner's new beginning for the Bat-franchise, starring Christian Bale—hits theaters in June from INSOMNIA director Christopher Nolan and BLADE screenwriter David Gover. Goyer may subsequently write and direct a remake of the 1973 sci-fi fave SOYLENT GREEN for Warners . . . Jedi Master Yoghurt lives! Mel Brooks is developing a sequel to his 1987 spoof SPACE-BALLS, with hopes for a summer release to compete head-to-head with the slightly higher-budgeted STAR WARS EPISODE 3: REVENGE OF THE SITH . . . Filming is under way on Steven Spielberg's adaptation of H. G. Wells' War of the Worlds, with Tom Cruise as star and coproducer . . . Other remakes tentatively due in 2005 include THE PINK PANTHER (MGM), with Steve Martin subbing for Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau; Paramount's production of THE SECRET LIFE OF WAL-TER MITTY, starring Jim Carrey; FAHR-ENHEIT 451 (Castle Rock) from THE GREEN MILE writer/director Frank Darabont; and KING KONG (Universal) from Oscar-winning LORD OF THE RINGS producer/director Peter Jackson.

Don't Dream It's Over(bite)

Project Greenlight-the annual independent filmmakers' competition sponsored by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, in association with Miramax and Bravohas received thousands of scripts by hopeful shoestring auteurs during its three years of existence. One of this year's 100 finalists was CHOMP!, a horror spoof written by New York City musical performer George Sanders (seen frequently at famed Manhattan piano bar Don't Tell Mama) and his performing partner Sean Curran. The plot concerns a university's genetic experiments in the regeneration of human teeth, with the dubious introduction of shark DNA into the molars of unsuspecting students. The awful tooth (sorry) is revealed when the kids become cannibalistic man-eaters! Although CHOMP! didn't win this year's competition, Sanders and Curran are shopping their toothsome screenplay around, with high hopes that a local producer will bite.

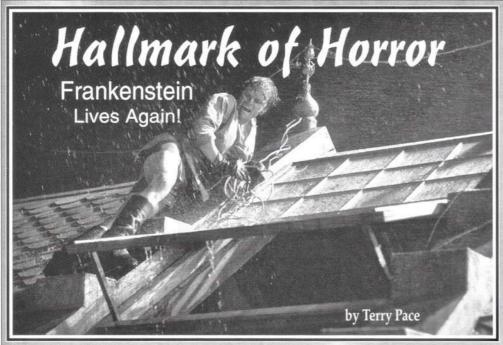
Small Screen Scene

Tiger Aspect Productions and the BBC have completed a followup to their 2002 teleflick THE HOUND OF THE BASK-ERVILLES. The new script—an original work not based on Conan Doyle's canon—stars the wonderful Rupert Everett as Sherlock Holmes, replacing HOUND's Richard Roxburgh. Ian Hart returns in the role of Dr. Watson. THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES is scheduled to screen on BBC ONE on December 26, with a 2005 Stateside appearance likely. Meanwhile, JEEVES AND WOOSTER funnymen Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie are reportedly portraying Holmes and Watson in a telefilm for UK broadcaster ITV.

In a decidedly ominous move, the Fox Network has moved back the second-season premiere of its fantasy series TRU CALLING to January, and has reduced its initial order from 13 episodes to six. BUFFY alumnus Eliza Dushku stars in the supernaturally-tinged show as a Manhattan morgue attendant who takes backward leaps in time to save the lives of her "customers." Let's hope similar heroics won't be needed to keep this enjoyable series on the air.

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It's been 10 years since producer Francis Ford Coppola and actor/director Kenneth Branagh joined forces to tell the "true" story of MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN (1994). That ill-fated film, released as a matching bookend to Coppola's semi-successful BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA (1992), purported to shatter classic movie myths by unfolding the first truly faithful screen interpretation of Shelley's trailblazing 1816 novel.

Admirers of the book and fans of previous Frankenstein films generally found Branagh's feature to be frenetic, unwieldy, and shamefully overacted, with Robert DeNiro's depiction of the creature as a noble savage far less sympathetic than Boris Karloff's prototypical

portraval from the 1930s.

Now, a decade later, Frankenstein aficionados have been rewarded for their patience and fortitude. Airing in the weeks before Halloween (and now available on DVD), the Hallmark Channel's handsome, well-paced and splendidly acted production of FRANKENSTEIN—directed by genre veteran Kevin Connor—adheres more closely to Shelley's text than any screen version to date.

"It's strange, isn't it?" muses British director Connor, whose previous credits range from the anthology chiller FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE (1973) to the macabre comedy MOTEL HELL (1980) with Rory Calhoun. "It's been Hollywoodized over and over, but no one ever does the actual book. So that's what we tried to do—to stick very closely to the book and tell the story

the way Mary Shelley wrote it."

Fans who prefer their Frankenstein films soaked in blood and gore should seek their cheap thrills elsewhere. But for minds open to a mature, thought-provoking, sensitively acted rendering of Shelley's timeless tale—in its day a daring Romantic-era rumination on the Prometheus myth—Hallmark's four-hour miniseries offers a drama so reverently literate that it generates emotional resonance and moral complexity seldom found in the genre.

"I enjoy doing intelligent horror and fantasy, but I tried not to make a horror film with FRANKENSTEIN because that's been done so many times," Connor observed in a recent interview. "I think what we've done with it will be awakening, because it's certainly different

from the way it's been played in previous films. We've tried to bring out the humanity in both the Creature and his creator."

Fortunately, fidelity to Shelley's text doesn't diminish the dark, disturbing elements of Hallmark's production. The Gothic terror develops gradually and naturally, as young medi-cal student Victor Frankenstein (an intelligent, passionate performance by Alec Newman) drifts into God's domain through radical experiments with life and death. Stitching together pieces of dead bodies into a single human form, Frankenstein becomes increasingly obsessed with using the power of electricity to animate his lifeless, manmade creation. Once the

Creature (he can't be called a "monster" in this one) is brought to life, his creator rejects and abandons him, setting off a spiraling descent of tragic and horrible events that ultimately bring the symbiotic duo face-to-face in a heartbreaking final encounter.

Newman is well-matched with an equally impressive costar—Luke Goss, whose portrayal of the Creature is haunting and multidimensional. The effectively understated makeup design was created by Cullman native Robert Hall, former makeup maestro for BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER and ANGEL.

The acting ensemble also offers memorable performances by Nicole Lewis (as Victor's ill-fated love, Elizabeth) and Julia Delpy (as his mother), with William Hurt (as Dr. Waldman, his medical mentor) and Donald Sutherland (as Walton, the ship's captain who helps structure the flashback-driven tale) adding stature and star power to a rare retelling of FRANKENSTEIN that actually exceeds audience expectations.

TOP LEFT: Victor Frankenstein (Alec Newman) always favors hot pants and go-go boots when he's creating a monster. BELOW: Frankenstein confronts his Creature (Luke Goss).





NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 20 CHARLIE'S ANGELS feature director McG is developing an eerie series for Fox that's described as a cross between ROUTE 66 and THE X-FILES. The asyet-untitled show follows a road-tripping pair of brothers who investigate freaky happenings and local haunts as they drive across the United States. Coproducing the series for Warner Bros. TV is Eric Kripke, late of the WB Network's blink-and-you-missed-it TAR-ZAN series of 2003.

The Home Video Vault

Available from Universal this Fall is THE MARX BROTHERS SILVER SCREEN COLLECTION (\$59.98), containing all five of the Marxes' original Paramount classics: THE COCOANUTS (1929), ANI-MAL CRACKERS (1930), MONKEY BUSI-NESS (1931), HORSE FEATHERS (1932), and DUCK SOUP (1933). A sixth bonus disc contains vintage televised interviews with Groucho and Harpo from NBC's TODAY SHOW.

MGM provides some Fall finery as well, with the DVD releases of the 1948 Selznick fantasy PORTRAIT OF JENNY (\$14.95), producer Robert Aldrich's BABY JANE followup WHATEVER HAP-PENED TO AUNT ALICE? (1969/\$14.95), and a tentatively-scheduled boxed set of eight Alfred Hitchcock classics: THE 39 STEPS (1935), SABOTAGE (1936), YOUNG AND INNOCENT (1937), THE LADY VANISHES (1938), REBECCA (1940), SPELLBOUND (1945), NOTORI-OUS (1946), and THE PARADINE CASE (1947), all previously released on DVD. When will someone get around to releasing on DVD the never-released LIFE-BOAT (1944)?

More Video News

Coming to DVD in January: EXOR-CIST: THE BEGINNING (Warner Home Video), M. Night Shyamalan's THE VILLAGE (Buena Vista), CATWOMAN (Warner), ALIEN VS. PREDATOR (Fox), and BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SE-RIES, VOLUME 2 (Warner)

The folks at Disney DVD have Synned. After announcing an August debut for DR. SYN, ALIAS THE SCARECROW, the Mouse Mavens pulled the title from their slate-although it's rumored that they're prepping for a 2005 release. The Hound hopes the delay provides an opportunity for some great supplemental material-perhaps a commentary from star Patrick McGoohan, who counts THE SCARECROW among his favorite roles. Also delayed—THE SHAGGY DOG, starring Fred MacMurray and Scarlet Street fave Tommy Kirk.

Return with us now to the good old days of the eighties "dead teenager" flicks, when hockey masks and machetes were the rage, and the body count exceeded the leading lady's brassiere size. CAMP DAZE is a tongue-in-cheek independent horror opus from Scream Kings Productions that pays twisted tribute to FRIDAY THE 13th, SLEEP-AWAY CAMP, and the like. Watch for a homevideo release in 2005.

Holmes on Home Video

The late, great Peter Cushing made a smashing Sherlock in his one and only theatrical feature as the Great Detective-Hammer's THE HOUND OF THE BAS-KERVILLES (1959). Cushing continued his Sherlockian portrayals—alongside Nigel Stock as Dr. Watson, in a 1968 BBC television series-never seen in the USA, nor rescreened in Britain for over three decades. BBC Worldwide has finally made five of these smallscreen productions available on Region 2 DVD (playable in the UK and Ireland, and by Stateside owners of multiregion players). The three-disc set "A Study in Scarlet," "The Boscontains combe Valley Mystery," "The Sign of Four," "The Blue Carbuncle," and a twopart adaptation of "The Hound of the Baskervilles." The set has a list price of £24.99 (about \$45.00), and can be ordered through major British e-tailers. Here's hoping for a Region 1 release.

In other Holmesian video news, MPI has released DVD editions of the remaining Jeremy Brett productions that hadn't vet been available on silver disc: THF CASEBOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES and THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (both sets with liner notes by Scarlet Reditor Richard Valley). Each three-disc set bears a list price of \$39.98.

The Street's Mr. Valley also lends his prodigious pen to liner notes for Synergy Entertainment's new boxed set of all 39 episodes of the 1954 syndicated half-hour TV series SHERLOCK HOLMES. Ronald Howard and Howard Marion Crawford star as Holmes and Watson in this low-budget yet cosmopolitan series that was a UK/French coproduction from American producer Sheldon Reynolds. The six-disc DVD set is scheduled for release in 2005 at a list price of \$34.99.

Continued on page 81

exano

According to the Kinsey Report Every average man you know Much prefers his lovey dovey to

When the temperature is low. -Cole Porter (KISS ME KATE)

For the average conservative American man or woman, the real monster isn't Count Dracula, The Wolf Man, The Creature From the Black Lagoon, or Frankenstein's Monster, the last of which put in an appearance in writer/director Bill Condon's fictionalized biography of director James Whale's last days, GODS AND MONSTERS (1998). Nor is it Roxie Hart or any of the other hot-shot harlots who got away with murder in Rob Marshall's CHICAGO (2002), for which Condon wrote the screenplay.

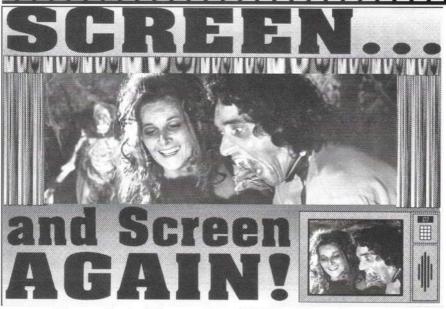
No, sir, the Fiend that frightens America-and has done so ever since the first Puritan embroidered a scarlet "A"-is Sex. In our skittish society, Sex doesn't frighten the horses, but it sure as hell puts a scare in the farmer behind the plow. (In fact, just the thought of plowing probably turns the poor farmer gray!)

So it should come as no surprise that Bill Condon has taken the bull by the accessories and written and directed KINSEY, the new biopic starring Liam Neeson as the maverick bisexual sex researcher who, during the 1940s and 1950s, brought the monster into American homes from coast to coast with the publication of Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (1948) and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (1953).

The cast includes Laura Linney, Peter Sarsgaard, Chris O'Donnell, Timothy Hutton, John Lithgow, Tim Curry, Oliver Platt, and, in a beautifully acted cameo, Lynn Redgrave. Scarlet Street caught KINSEY at a press screening and we can only say-don't miss it! Don't let conservatives and the religious right zip up the monster forever.

-Drew Sullivan





Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

GHOST OF DRAGSTRIP HOLLOW/ GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI MGM Home Entertainment—\$9.98

AIP's GHOST OF DRAGSTRIP HOLLOW (1959), featured on the A side of this MGM twofer, plays like a thematic dress rehearsal for the studio's future Beach Party series. A group of Southern California teenagers has formed the Zenith Car Club, an organization of hot-rod enthusiasts fronted by Lois Cavendish (Jody Fair). The kids dance whenever they're not tinkering with carburetors. There's a rival club, too, but controversies are settled with races rather than rumbles.

The supporting cast is comprised of adults more bemused than disapproving of the teens' antics. Russ Bender plays Tom Hendry, a journalist researching the hot-rod culture (a device that would be repeated in 1963's series kickoff BEACH PARTY, with Bob Cummings' leering anthropologist easing movie audiences into the mating rituals of the surfers). Another cast member, Dorothy Neumann, enacts a prototypical "funny adult" with a preposterous name, the eccentric Anastasia Abernathy.



Anastasia volunteers the use of her haunted house at Dragstrip Hollow for the club's fund-raising "Spook Ball." A dancer in a monster suit is unmasked as a disgruntled, has-been horror actor (portrayed by AIP monster costumer Paul Blaisdell). Though not a household name, Blaisdell's in-joke appearance seems like the inspiration for the studio's use of cameos by its beloved horror icons, which would provide punch lines for most of the Beach films.

Side B offers the series' final official entry, GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BI-KINI (1966). The familiar teens/funny adults formula is inserted into a spoof involving the heirs to the hidden fortune of Hiram Stokely (Boris Karloff). The beneficiaries, consisting of Chuck Phillips (Tommy Kirk), Reginald Ripper (Basil Rathbone), Myrtle Forbush (Patsy Kelly), and Lili Morton (Deborah Walley), gather at Stokely's forbidding mansion for a midnight reading of the will.

This particular deck, already stacked with jokers, is further complicated by the arrival of fortune hunters Eric Von Zipper (Harvey Lembeck) and his rat pack, Bobby (Aron Kincaid) and his par-

tying buddies, and Princess Yolanda (Bobbi "Yah, yah" Shaw). Ripper plans to murder the other heirs, but his machinations are thwarted by the intervention of the living corpse of Stokely and the bikinied ghost of Stokely's long-lost love, Cecily (Susan Hart).

This confection suggests a summation of two popular AIP genres—the Beach Party comedies and the Edgar Allan Poe chillers. The horror elements (ghosts, corpses, lugubrious sets) are balanced with musical numbers per-

formed by Nancy Sinatra, The Bobby Fuller Four, and Danny Thomas discovery Piccola Pupa. The two threads seamlessly converge in the film's climactic musical rave-up, performed in Stokely's torture chamber. The set dressings represent one of art director Daniel Haller's most inspired efforts. The chamber boasts an eye-popping collection of Gothic masks, mannequins performing horror vignettes, and antique torture apparatuses that harken back to Roger Corman's PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961). Les Baxter's music underlines the mood by utilizing stark percussive effects that recall his earlier PENDULUM score. Although INVISIBLE BIKINI unspools like a montage of blackouts and pratfalls, that final sequence with the teenagers frantically frugging in the dungeon provides an appropriately affectionate send-off for both of the popular AIP genres. Within the year, the studio would begin tackling the much harder-edged contemporary subjects of psychedelia and generational unrest.

Both the full-frame DRAGSTRIP HOL-LOW and the widescreen (2:35-1) INVIS-IBLE BIKINI have been transferred from nearly flawless source materials. The only supplement is a faded and cropped trailer for BIKINI. This beachslapping double feature DVD provides a pleasing overview of the roots and the culmination of the nostalgic AIP series.

—John F. Black

VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED/ CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED Warner Home Video—\$19.95

British science fiction films of the fifties and sixties—especially the early Hammer Quatermass films—did something that most American sci-fi films of the period didn't do. They assumed the audience was intelligent. Though the two movies contained on this DVD were made by MGM's British wing, they make excellent cases for the British doing sci-fi better in this era than their counterparts across the pond.

In VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED

In VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED (1960), the entire town of Midwich falls unconscious, and a few months later, a dozen women give birth to children who are half-human and half-alien. They're not bundles of joy. They communicate telepathically with one another, grow at an accelerated rate, and work together to sinister ends. When they get irritated, their eyes glow and

really frightening things tend to happen. But that's not the worst of it. All over the world, there are isolated colonies of these nasty, platinum-blonde li'l tykes, and they're being killed off by their elders. In the Soviet Union, an atomic bomb is employed to wipe out an entire city, just to ensure the destruction of a dozen or so of these charmers. In the UK, though, there's George Sanders, and that's enough. As Gordon Zellaby, Sanders turns in one of the best performances of his career. Cast against type, he displays none of

the smarminess or self-satisfaction usually associated with his screen persona; he's noble, determined, and quite sympathetic. You can believe that Gordon's married to the much younger Anthea (Barbara Shelley), and that she loves him.

CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED (1964), despite its sequel status, is really a differently thought-out retelling of the same story. In CHILDREN, the titular tykes are portrayed as the probable next step in human evolution, a multiracial, Rainbow Coalition of Evil. Their distinctive platinum hair is gone, but the glowing eyes remain, as do their mysterious intentions. Our heroes this time are a pair of male child psychologists (who live and work together in the same London flat-hmmmm) played by Ian Hendry and Alan Badel. Like VILLAGE, this film is very much of its era-specifically, The Cold War. In the first film, the children represent what Communism was perceived to be-cold and emotionless. In CHILDREN, the young ones are potential WMDs, and a major plot point involves which world power will get control of them. Of course, the kids have their own agenda. It's not as thrilling a film as the first, but it's very good nonetheless.

This DVD is a bargain. Not only are the movies presented in superb letterboxed transfers, enhanced for 16x9 TVs, but Warner Bros. has included the theatrical trailers and commentary tracks for both features. (The VILLAGE track,



by Steve Haberman is especially good; the CHILDREN track, by screenwriter John Briley, is informative, but rather dry.) For fans of intelligent, well-made science fiction films, this disc is an absolutely essential purchase.

-Robin Anderson

HORATIO HORNBLOWER: THE NEW ADVENTURES A&E Home Video—\$29.99

Classy production values support first-rate acting, with Ioan Gruffudd as Horatio Hornblower again, in this continuing story of England's naval campaign in the Napoleonic Wars. A&E Television Networks and Meridian Broadcasting, Ltd. produced LOYALTY and DUTY, broadcast by A&E TV in the USA on December 2 and 3, 2003. Writers Niall Leonard (LOYALTY) and Stephen Churchett (DUTY) based their screenplays on the ending of C. S. Forester's

Lieutenant Hornblower (1952) and on Hornblower and the Hotspur (1962), set in 1803 and 1804.

The DVDs preserve the original anamorphic widescreen format from British TV, in English with optional closed



captioning. Each DVD includes a photo gallery of 10 stills. LOYALTY adds perfunctory biographies of Gruffudd, Robert Lindsay (Admiral Sir Edward Pellew, a composite of Pellew and Vice-Admiral Cornwallis), and Paul McGann (Hornblower's new best friend, Lieutenant Bush), along with director Andrew Grieve, producer Andrew Benson, and costume designer John Mollo. Each DVD also features a commentary track, with Grieve and Benson on LOYALTY and Grieve, Benson, and Mollo on DUTY. They mostly discuss historical accuracy and the minutiae of production.

The image is crisp and bright. The audio, Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo, does justice to John Keane's fine music score. In the battle scenes, several of them quite graphic, the blend of real ships on location, Pinewood Studios footage, and post-production effects looks reasonably convincing. Viewers will recognize some scenes from the novels, but the writers combine many characters and simplify Forester's story with drastic revisions. For instance, semi-comic seamen Styles (Sean Gilder) and Matthews (Paul Copley) replace more than a dozen of Forester's minor characters.

In LOYALTY, Hornblower captains the Hotspur, a 20-gun sloop, while coping with his alcoholic landlady, Mrs. Mason (Barbara Flynn); her clinging vine daughter, Maria (Julia Sawalha); Styles promoted to memorable incompetence as a steward; a cowardly midshipman, Jack Hammond (Christian Coulson); a French royalist, Major Côtard (Greg Wise), serving with the British; and Côtard's opposite number, invented for the movie: Coxswain Wolfe (Lorcan Cranitch), an Irish separatist who defects to the French. Wolfe resembles the historical Theobald Wolfe Tone, founder of United Irishmen.

DUTY begins as Hornblower, manipulated into marrying Maria, vomits before their wedding. Uneasy about touching or kissing her, he can't conceal that he'd rather go to sea-though the hints that he might be gay are even more ambiguous in LOYALTY and DUTY than in previous episodes that took place before Lieutenant Archie Kennedy (Jamie Bamber) died. Hornblower and Kennedy shared deep friendship and love, stronger than the web of financial and social obligations that Maria and her mother use to snare the reluctant groom. Back with the Hotspur on a surveillance mission off the French coast, Hornblower rescues three people of questionable identity from a sinking quarterboat. Admiral Pellew gives Hornblower a proper steward, James Doughty (Ron Cook), but when jealous crewmen goad Doughty into committing a serious crime, Hornblower must keep the crew's loyalty while tempering duty with mercy

As always, HORATIO HORNBLOWER is highly recommended.

-Lelia Loban

THE BAD SEED

Warner Home Video-\$19.97

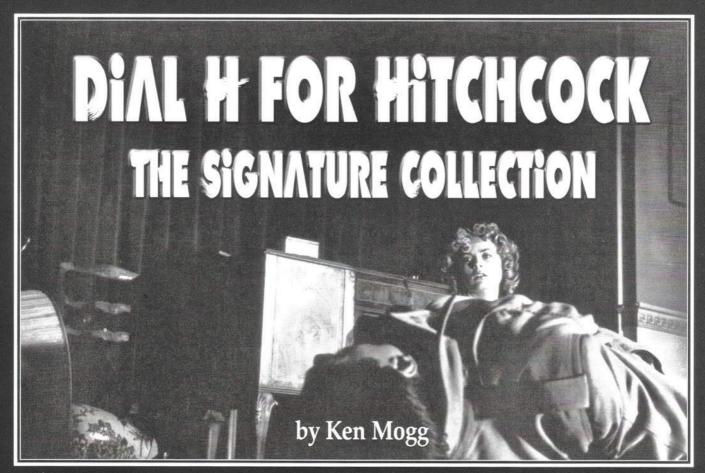
Maxwell Anderson's THE BAD SEED—adapted from the 1954 novel by William March—was a theatrical hit in the 1954-55 season. A wise Mervyn LeRoy realized that there was a fine film ready made to be lensed, with an accomplished ensemble of players ready to go. Led by Nancy Kelly and with an amazingly adult performance from young Patty McCormack, the cast—which included fine support from Eileen Heckart and Henry Jones—had honed and perfected a difficult script in grand style night after night for almost a year.

LeRoy imported much of the Broadway cast to Warner Bros., where in 1956 he produced and directed an excellent adaptation. Almost 50 years later, the story of murderous little Rhoda Penmark (McCormack) and the nervous breakdown of her mother, Christine (Kelly), makes for a somewhat dated movie, but the performances remain timeless and fresh. It is a definitely a filmed play, but the high-pitched stage performances mesh into an in-



tense, grand ensemble that celebrates its very staginess.

Continued on page 28



hat Hitchcock signature, exactly?
Each of these nine films puts a character on the wrong side of the law, but otherwise they don't appear to have much in common. The complete package contains: two picaresque thrillers (FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, NORTH BY NORTHWEST), a hit play filmed virtually on one set (DIAL M FOR MURDER), two underrated comedies (MR. AND MRS. SMITH, STAGE FRIGHT), two intensely "Catholic" films, one of them drawn from real life (I CONFESS, THE WRONG MAN), and two films about charming psychopaths (SUSPICION, STRANGERS ON A TRAIN)—but all nine films come on discs of superior technical quality, complete with documentaries and trailers.

Hitchcock buffs may almost want the discs for the "making of" documentaries alone. All but one are directed by the estimable Laurent Bouzereau (the exception—NORTH BY NORTHWEST— is directed by Peter Fitzgerald). Bouzereau calls his company Blue Collar Productions, and his workmanlike filming and editing do it credit. Although the documentaries are no more than introductions to each film, like Johnny Jones and Roger Thornhill in the picaresque thrillers they cover plenty of ground. Four experts feature in all the Bouzereaus: veteran director Peter Bogdanovich; Alfred Hitchcock's daughter, Patricia Hitch-cock O'Connell; film historian Robert Osborne; and author Richard Schickel. Other individuals address us at apt moments. We even get to meet the three charming Hitchcock granddaughters.

On a previous Bouzereau documentary covering THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY (1955), Pat Hitchcock goofed. The novel's author, she told us, had once appeared in her father's film CHAMPAGNE (1928). She was confusing Jack Trevor Story (b. 1917) with an actor named Jack Trevor. Happily, there appear to be few goofs in the HITCH-COCK SIGNATURE COLLECTION, but one occurs when Schickel discusses Hitchcock's tastes in art (on the STRANGERS ON A TRAIN two-disc set). Hitchcock didn't like abstract expressionism, Schickel claims. Au contraire—the director's favorite painter was the Bauhaus-trained Paul Klee (1879-1940), whose work often showed just such a tendency.

Disc by disc, the SIGNATURE COL-LECTION impresses. FOREIGN COR-RESPONDENT (1940), made straight after Hitchcock's American feature debut, the Oscar-winning REBECCA (1940), may be the shrewdest of all propaganda films. Targeting US neutrality vis-à-vis the war in Europe, it's every bit as entertaining as Chaplin's antifascist THE GREAT DICTATOR, released the same year. Bouzereau and his team highlight the care Hitchcock invested in filming on a Hollywood lot a key scene set in rainy Amsterdam. However, they don't always see the bigger picture. Novelist Peter Benchley, grandson of Robert Benchley (who appears in the film), is heard wondering why Hitch-cock chose a Dutch locale. Nobody cites the film's breathtaking topicality: Hitler had invaded Holland on May 10, 1940. (The film was released in August.) In turn, that country's flat terrain inspired the exciting car chase that leads hero Johnny Jones (Joel Mc-Crea) to a sinister windmill—whose interior has chiaroscuro effects worthy of Rembrandt.

Of MR. AND MRS. SMITH (1941), starring Carole Lombard and Robert Montgomery, the astute director of PSYCHO II (1983), Richard Franklin, tells Bouzereau: "It's one of the really, really good screwball comedies." Hitchcock's accomplishment is the more remarkable because the English director was "virtually just off the boat." The film is one of Hitchcock's ambiguous testaments to married life, like RICH AND STRANGE (1932) and REAR WINDOW (1954). Note "life." We even see that word highlighted, for ironic effect, in the scene where a rainsoaked Ann Smith (Lombard) and escort Jeff Custer (Gene Raymond) become stranded on a broken-down Ferris wheel at Coney Island. Hitchcock seems to be saying, "Even a rocky marriage beats this!" Regrettably, Bouzereau's documentary doesn't include recently unearthed film of an impish Lombard directing—over and over—Hitchcock's cameo appearance.

over—Hitchcock's cameo appearance. SUSPICION (1941) and STAGE FRIGHT (1950) both illustrate what author Bill Krohn describes to Bouz-







PAGE 26: Grace Kelly finds out what it's like to star on the "Hell Telephone Hour" in Alfred Hitchcock's DIAL M FOR MURDER (1954). LEFT: Though it looks like a scene from a screwball comedy, Cary Grant, Joan Fontaine, and Nigel Bruce have serious matters on their minds in SUSPICION (1941). CENTER: Johnny Jones (Joel McCrea) makes like a bird in the rafters while a drugged Van Meer (Albert Basserman) awaits his captors in FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (1940). RIGHT: As Alma Keller, Dolly Haas points to the killer as method actor Montgomery Clift tries to figure out his motivation in I CONFESS (1953). BOTTOM RIGHT: Guy Haines (Farley Granger) and Anne Morton (Ruth Roman) share a romantic clinch in STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1951), but the central couple in the film is really Guy and Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker).

ereau as "subjective" technique. Krohn cites the scrabble/anagrams sequence in SUSPICION, in which Lina Aysgarth (Joan Fontaine) finds herself forming the word "murderer" and imagining that husband Johnnie (Cary Grant) plans to kill first his pal "Beaky" (Nigel Bruce), then herself. We actually see Lina's hands in closeup start to form the word—the hands could be ours! STAGE FRIGHT ups the ante. Like a certain Agatha Christie novel, it proves to be told from the murderer's viewpoint. Moreover, in a film about artifice, Hitchcock's camera is constantly playing tricks on us. Example: the controversial lying flashback.

Again, when Jonathan Cooper (Richard Todd) tells covillain Charlotte Inwood (Marlene Dietrich) that he has kept an incriminating piece of evidence—which is another lie—the camera suddenly whip-pans to Charlotte. The visceral effect on the viewer matches the shock on Charlotte's face. So prolific are these devices that they constitute a running gag, anticipating the "sense of amusement" that Hitchcock said he brought to the telling of PSYCHO (1960). More overt comedy in STAGE FRIGHT is provided by its cast of English eccentrics. In yet another scene set in a downpour, toothy Joyce Grenfell (but not Terry-Thomas!) pops up at a charity bazaar for war orphans, crying surrealistically for one and all to "shoot lovely ducks!" Bouzereau turns again to Richard Franklin to remind us of a quite different PSYCHO connection. When Todd's character finally snaps, he is "very, very scary," says Franklin. "He's almost like Norman Bates."

I CONFESS (1953) has a virtual "lying flashback" of its own. Bill Krohn points out that, when Ruth Grandfort (Anne Baxter) recalls the wartime absence overseas of her lover, Michael Logan (Montgomery Clift), the sequence never explains what causes Michael to have a change of heart and to enter the priesthood after his return. Peter Bogdanovich concurs. Calling Clift "one of the great American actors... one of the most beautiful [of]

men," he says that Michael's reason for breaking off his engagement to Ruth is "never completely identified." Given the casting of Clift, and Hitchcock's avowed preference for actors whose life experiences fitted them for their roles, the gay subtexts of ROPE (1948) and STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1951) leap to mind. I'll return to this in conclusion.

"The essence of Hitchcock's craft" is how Richard Franklin labels DIAL M FOR MURDER (1954). An important part of that craft is Hitchcock's attention to backstory. Bogdanovich praises Ray Milland's suave villain, Tony Wendice—but neglects to mention the character's terror of being deserted by wealthy wife Morgot (Grace Kelly), whom he knows is pursuing an affair with Mark Halliday (Robert Cummings). (Nice to have Pat Hitchcock remember Grace as "one of the sweetest people in the world.") Richard Schickel suggests that the film shows Hitchcock's occasional distrust of the upper classes and "the possibility that they may use their privilege to do evil in the world."

Hitchcock's mastery of tone and style, they should watch a double-bill of THE WRONG MAN (1957) and NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959). The two films take essentially the same situation, of mistaken identity, but the first is tragic, the second a wild comedy-thriller. Of THE WRONG MAN, Bogdanovich notes that "the loss of love between [Manny and Rose Balestrero, played by Henry Fonda and Vera Miles] is one of the most poignant things in the movie

. . . it's a very sad

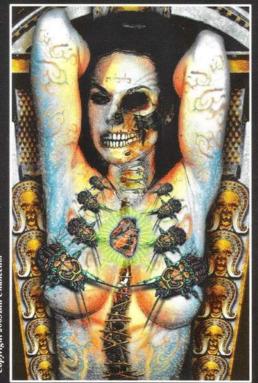
If anyone doubts

picture." Like NORTH BY NORTH-WEST, it has a score by Bernard Herrmann. Full marks to Christopher Husted of the Herrmann estate for his comment about the score's "lyrical oases" during the home scenes.

Note that the classy NORTH BY NORTHWEST DVD in the present package is a reissue. Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint and James Mason star. The matted presentation preserves the film's original 1.85 aspect ratio. Herrmann's exhilarating score is available on a separate track with visuals. There's also an unnecessary commentary track by screenwriter Ernest Lehman, full of

Continued on





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"LILITH"

SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 25 Nancy Kelly won a Tony Award as Christine and was nominated for an Academy Award for the film version. It's an exhausting and heavy performance, but well rooted in the reality of the time. Kelly takes her audience on an amazing journey with skill and finesse. In the intervening years, THE BAD SEED has become something of a camp cult classic, and Nancy Kelly beating her ovaries in despair has become the epitome of a diva's overwrought mannerisms. What remains compelling is how well Kelly walks that razor's edge between reality and melodrama without making the character laughable. It's a performance from another time and in another style,

but it's still potent.

McCormack and Heckart were nominated for Supporting Actress Oscars, as was Harold Rosson for his black-andwhite cinematography. Heckart's masterful playing of drunken Mrs. Daigle, who suspects little Rhoda knows more than she's telling about her little boy's "accidental" drowning, is, like Kelly's, perilously close to excess but vitally honest in its delivery. That's where the real thrill lies in this thriller now—not so much in the plot (whose ironic ending was changed to conform to Hollywood censorship standards of the time) but in the glimpse it gives us at an acting style now out of fashion, but nonetheless fascinating.

Also lending fine support are Evelyn Varden and Joan Croydon. Alex North's musical scoring is restrained and elegantly right, echoing the great accompaniment he provided such Broadway-to-Hollywood fare as DEATH OF A SALESMAN (1949). North's deft scoring, much of it incorporating the piano piece uses the piano piece ("Au Clair de la Lune") practiced by Rhoda during the course of the action, even salvages the notoriously rewritten climax (in which Providence takes justice into its own hands).

DVD extras include an amusing and informative commentary from star Patty McCormack and playwright Charles Busch (who should have done more homework beforehand and listened more attentively to Patty, who is wise and witty), an engaging separate conversation with McCormack, and the trailer. The image and sound are first rate. Warners scores with an excellent addition to anyone's thriller library.

—Farnham Ścott

NAKED IN NEW YORK

Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment— \$24.96

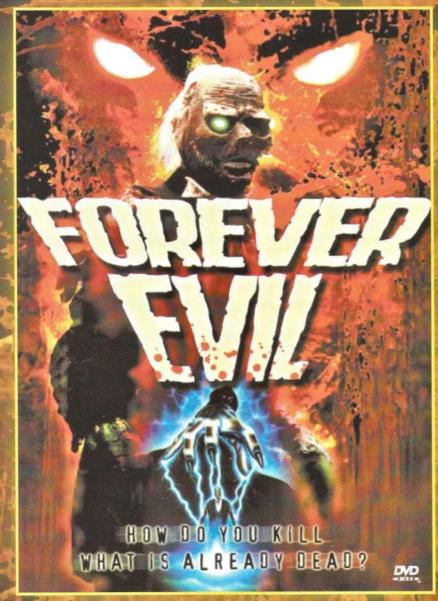
Back in the 1930s, MGM periodically showered moviegoers with stars (Greta Garbo, Jean Harlow, John and Lionel Barrymore, Marie Dressler, Joan Crawford, Wallace Beery, Billie Burke) in such classy films as GRAND HOTEL (1932) and DINNER AT EIGHT (1933). In the seventies and early eighties, a series of Agatha Christie adaptations revived the tradition and polished the silver screens with the likes of Lauren Bacall, Ingrid Bergman, Richard Widmark, Sean Connery, Angela Lansbury, Maggie



Smith, Wendy Barrie, Anthony Perkins, and Bette Davis.

Along came the nineties and the day of the all-star feature had passed—as had many of the stars. The best NAKED IN NEW YORK (1993) can offer star-gazers is Eric Stoltz, Mary-Louise Parker, Ralph Macchio, Jill Clayburgh, Timothy Dalton, Kathleen Turner, Roscoe Lee Browne, and Quentin Crisp in a slight, flashback- and dream-filled story about a couple of college grads (Stoltz and Parker as Jake and Joanne) trying to make it in the arts—he as a playwright, she as a photographer.

It's actually an enjoyable little film, sparked by Stoltz's sensitive portrayal



fun outing by a group college graduates turns into a nightmare. Marc Denning barely escapes with his lif and has to sit by helplessly as his friends are brutally mutilated by some super natural force. Some time later, Marc meets a myste rious woman who claims to have lived through a similar experience. United together they search to uncover and destroy this evil force. The closer the duo gets to the evil, the more tragic their lives become. Can they ever overcome this supernatural beast that is FOREVER EVIL? Can the world survive if they don't? WARNING! Not for the squeamish!

Bonus:

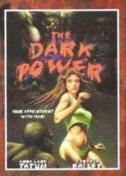
- Director & Writer Commentary
- Original Director Cut plus Direct-to-Video version
- Deleted Scenes
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- Promotional Trailers
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and his then-traditional—and usually frontal—nude scene (see 1988's THE FLY II, see 1988's HAUNTED SUMMER, see . . .), Turner as the star of Jake's play, Macchio as Jake's gay friend, Chris. (Jake and Chris share a kiss, but the relationship doesn't progress beyond that.) And for a shot of good old Hollywood star power, there's Tony Curtis, charming and energetic as an off-Broadway producer.

-Drew Sullivan

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA Image Entertainment—\$24.99

Lon Chaney's THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925) was substantially modified before release. Initially faithful to Gaston Leroux's 1911 novel, the film did poorly in previews. Comedy material and a climactic chase through Paris were added. This, too, flopped; the comedy was discarded and the film revised yet again. The material was rejiggered a third time for a 1929 rerelease that added talking segments. This version replicated the 1925 footage with alternate takes made for foreign market versions, unused Technicolor shots, and



other sources. It is this permutation, stripped of sound, that has been the "official" PHANTOM ever since.

The major benefit of this luxurious two-disc set from Image is the opportunity to see that 1925 version, even if it is courtesy of a badly battered print—because, as originally released, PHAN-TOM is a better movie than we knew. It's not vastly better—it may be the least deserving horror film designated as classic—but it's richer in details of plot and character and achieves an epic effect courtesy of its longer running time.

Nearly all of PHANTOM's problems stem from the uninspired direction of Rupert Julian, who, despite apprenticing with Erich von Stroheim, seems blissfully unaware that the camera is not a front-row center spectator in a live theater. One is grateful that Chaney had artistic differences with Julian early on

and took over direction of his own scenes—Chaney at least was cognizant of such concepts as the medium shot and the closeup—and that Edward Sedgewick handled the reshoot; his finale may be untrue to the book, but his camera finds interesting angles, allows for kinetic editing, and creates an exciting climax.

One certainly can't carp about a package presenting the equivalent of five different versions of THE PHANTOM: the 1925 release, the 1929 with its original soundtrack, the 1929 silent version with a magnificent score by Carl Davis, and still galleries recreating the original version and the comedic revision. It seems like carping to lament that the gorgeous restoration was wrought on the 1929 version instead of the 1925 edition. The two-strip Technicolor bal masque is now a visual feast (albeit of reds and greens) rather than a faded curiosity. The rooftop sequence is a stunner thanks to the Handschiegl process making Erik's billowing cape crimson against steel blue tinting.

There's an audio commentary, trailers, a video interview with Carla Laemmle, and an audio interview with cinematographer Charles Van Enger. The box art claim that this is "the ultimate edition" is no idle boast.

—Harry H. Long

THE DAY OF THE LOCUST Paramount Home Video—\$14.99

Nathaniel West's 1939 novel The Day of the Locust is a wildly imaginative allegory equating Hell with Hollywood. It took Hollywood itself-and a British director-three and a half decades to bring West's apocalyptic vision to the screen. In the trustworthy hands of John Schlesinger, who presented a Hellish version of Manhattan in MIDNIGHT COWBOY (1969), THE DAY OF THE LOCUST (1975) becomes a sun-drenched vision of thirties Hollywood populated by wanna-be's, hangers-on, and hasbeens. Waldo Salt's screenplay cunningly captures a town capable of sucking the souls from its inhabitants. It's a contemporary horror film with a period setting, inhabited by characters who are often cold and calculating, and rarely sympathetic. The film is a compelling indictment of the dark side of human nature.

The story concerns the denizens of the Moorish San Bernadino Arms, a crumbling collection of apartments on the outskirts of Hollywood. Abiding in the "San Berdoo" are straightlaced Midwesterner Tod Hackett (William Atherton), a gifted artist forced to take work in a pool of scenic designers; decrepit Harry Greener (Burgess Meredith), a former vaudevillian; and Harry's daughter, Faye (Karen Black), a platinum blonde bit player dreaming of stardom. Black delivers a fearless performance, never distancing herself from the conniving convictions of her character.



(Her constant off-key warbling of Johnny Mercer's "Jeepers Creepers," faithfully retained from the novel, is but one of her less endearing charms.) Strangest of the inhabitants is the androgynous trickster Adore (Jackie Haley), a preadolescent creature in Shirley Temple curls and Freddie Bartholomew suits.

On the outside looking in is the monolithic, monosyllabic, mysterious Homer Simpson (Donald Sutherland). Sutherland physically taps into the Homer of West's novel—a towering man, neither happy nor sad, burdened with hands having a life and will of their own.

Schlesinger leisurely allows time for character development, populating the periphery with such notable character actors as Richard A. Dysart, Bo Hopkins, John Hillerman, Gloria LeRoy, Billy Barty, and, as an Aimee McPhersonstyled faith healer, Geraldine Page. (Disco fans will be surprised to find a cameo appearance by Paul Jabara!) The critical characters' paths converge for a stunningly filmed, horrific finale outside of Grauman's Chinese Theater. THE DAY OF THE LOCUST is not for the squeamish viewer; in addition to the mass hysteria of the ending, there are brutally realistic, and heavily symbolic, cock fights on view.

Paramount has released a sparkling transfer, in the film's original aspect ratio and with anamorphic enhancement. In addition to the film's original mono soundtrack, there's a Dolby Digital 5.1 surround track. The latter rarely expands the soundstage, though it gives John Barry's mournful score its ample due. David Byrd's original poster art graces the cover. There are no special features. Still, Paramount presents a quality release, worthy of purchase.

—Anthony Dale

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

Walt Disney Home Video-\$19.99

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES is an enigma. A flop at the box office and a creative disappointment for Ray Bradbury (who was brought in to salvage it after filming had concluded and test screenings were proving disastrous), this 1983 Disney production still evokes a surprising amount of the magic found in Bradbury's 1962 novel.

In quintessential Bradbury style, the story takes place in a small Midwestern

town, where strangers rarely visit once fall arrives. Two young boys, Will Holloway and Jim Nightshade (Vidal Peterson and Shawn Carson, respectively), are coming of age—constantly yearning for adventure, but beginning to see the fear of abandoned dreams and forgotten hope in the adults around them. Will's father, Charles Holloway (Jason Robards), typifies such fear and remorse. A first-time father late in life, he struggles with the considerable age gap between himself and his son, carrying the mem-



ories of missed opportunities like a crushing weight in his bones. Other unhappy townsfolk include Ed (James Stacy), the former college football star passionately wishing he could still play were it not for the accident that literally cost him an arm and a leg; Mr. Crosetti

(Richard Davalos), the barber with a yen for voluptuous women; and Miss Foley (Mary Grace Canfield), the spinster schoolmarm who was once the loveliest girl in town. As with Charles Holloway, their secret desires still ache.

Into this mix comes a traveling carnival show. Will and Jim hear its train arriving late at night and witness its unbelievable transformation from boxcars to fully assembled pavilion in mere moments. Something strange indeed has visited in October. The aptly-named carnival proprietor, Mr. Dark (played to sinister perfection by Jonathan Pryce), lures the townspeople to the midway, his shadowy amusements preying on their regrets. Miss Foley regains her beauty, but her wish is granted at the price of her eyesight. Her fellow townspeople are similarly manipulated.

Will and Jim venture to the carnival after it closes each evening. Spying on Mr. Dark, they're just starting to learn his terrible secrets when they're discovered. Now they have to find a way to stop him, but Mr. Dark wields powerful lures—he tempts Jim with the promise of a father he's never known and offers to make Charles Holloway young again in exchange for surrendering his Will.

The combination of enchanting story and superb acting make this disregarded film a treat for viewers of any age. In addition to Robards and Pryce's performances, Royal Dano is unforgettable as Tom Fury, the lightning rod salesman. The hypnotic Pam Grier is perfect as the Dust Witch, who aids Mr. Dark.

The DVD offers both widescreen and full-frame viewing options, along with the theatrical trailer. Although it doesn't include Bradbury's audio commentary, which accompanied the laserdisc release, SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES offers a quality DVD of a film worth rediscovering.

-Michael D. Walker

ANGEL (SEASON THREE) 20th Century Fox Home Video—\$59.98

With this season of ANGEL, creator Joss Whedon dares to take his carefully crafted characters on a ground-breaking—and myth-breaking—journey down the path towards redemption. The third season plays out as a gargantuan Gothic opera over the course of its 22 episodes. ANGEL starts the season a few months following the events of BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER's shocking fifth-season fiery finale; events that forced ANGEL to become a true standalone series. Without the comfort of cross-over episodes, ANGEL is able to explore the character dynamics carefully set forth by Whedon.

Continued on page 34

Hey-y-y-y-y Abbottl

The Best of Bud Abbott and Lou Gostello (Volume 3)

THE BEST OF ABBOTT AND COSTELLO VOLUME 3 Universal—\$26.99

Critical consensus has it that Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were on the wane from 1948 through the early 1950s. According to the familiar refrain, the team ran out of gas after ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948) and began offering nothing but rehashes of earlier, better pictures. There's some truth to this: certainly ABBOTT AND COS-TELLO IN THE FOREIGN LEGION (1950) is no replacement for BUCK PRI-VATÉS (1941). LOST IN ALASKA (1952) is weaker than the equally wintry HIT THE ICE (1943). And none of the subsequent "Meet the Monsters" movies equals the brilliance of MEET FRANKENSTEIN.

Still, Bud and Lou's detractors have overstated the team's decline, as THE BEST OF ABBOTT AND COSTELLO VOLUME 3 proves. Even if most of the duo's finest films can be found in Volumes 1 and 2, lots of laughs linger for this third compilation.

The set begins with the crown jewel of the team's filmography, ABBOTT

AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKEN-STEIN. The film's praises have been sung so often, it's a wonder they never reached the Billboard charts. The key to this comic gem's success is simplicity itself-Bud and Lou never lampoon the beloved horror characters themselves, but let the humor arise from putting themselves in the middle of sinister scenarios created by Dracula (Bela Lugosi), The Wolf Man (Lon Chaney Jr.), and the Frankenstein Monster (Glenn Strange). It helps that Lugosi's performance as Dracula ranks among the actor's career bests. The set eliminates most of the bonus features found on the MEET FRANKENSTEIN Special Edition DVD the David Skal documentary, the Gregory Mank audio commentary, etc.-but luckily, the old MEET FRANKENSTEIN disc remains in print.

Up next is the very amusing and too often overlooked MEXICAN HAYRIDE (1948). Joe Bascom (Costello) finds himself mixed up in a confidence scam engineered by Harry Lambert (Abbott) and tracks him to Tijuana, the police in hot pursuit. One scam leads to another, and Joe finds himself entangled in an even more convoluted scheme.

Based on a hit Broadway musical with songs by Cole Porter, the film drops every last Porter tune from the narrative! Still, HAYRIDE moves briskly, features a solid supporting cast (Virginia Grey, Luba Malina, and, in an hilarious cameo as a vocal coach, Fritz Feld) and affords the team plenty of room to incorporate their trademark verbal and physical gags.

Bearing one of the great misnomer titles of all time, ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET

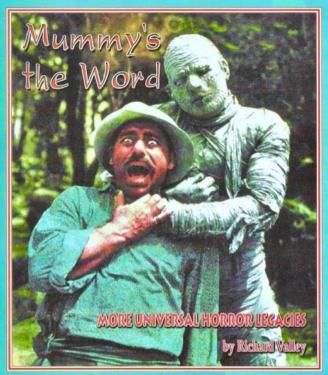
TELLO MEET
THE KILLER,
BORIS KARLOFF (1949) features several
standout sequences. Bellhop Freddie
Phillips (Costello) is accused
of murder.
With the help

of house detective Casey Edwards (Abbott), he tries to clear himself as the body count mounts. Karloff's name appears in the title, but his role (as red-herring spiritualist Swami Talpur) is thinly written and his wardrobe is

Continued on page 67







Move over, Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Wolf Man! Here come the Mummy, the Invisible Man, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon in the three latest Legacy Collections from Universal-and they bring with them several fright films never before available on DVD!

"You will not remember what I show you now-and yet I shall awaken memories of love and crime and death.

-THE MUMMY (1932)

THE MUMMY LEGACY COLLECTION offers the King of Horror, Boris Karloff, in one of his finest portrayals, as Im-Ho-Tep in Karl Freund's THE MUMMY (1932). After Im-Ho-Tep bites-or rather, becomes the dust, Kharis takes over for a quartet of grade B treasures, first with Tom Tyler in the role for THE MUMMY'S HAND (1940), then with Lon Chaney Jr. for THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1942), THE MUMMY'S GHOST (1944), and THE MUMMY'S CURSE (1944). The Mummy pictures-in particular, the last two-are Universal Horror very nearly at its cheapest, but that's never dampened the enthusiasm of those who find the hoary plots

namic, mesmerizing score for SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939) so permeates the series that it's the strongwilled fright fan who can watch the last of Karloff's Frankenstein films without picturing Kharis roaming the swamps of Massachusetts, the Louisiana Bayou, or the Hill of the Seven **Jackasses**

All five Egyptian artifacts have previously been available in the DVD format, but packaging them together serves up a veritable chorus line of horny high priests and idiotic acolytes-George Zucco, Eduardo Ciannelli, Turhan Bey, John Carradine, Peter Coe, and Martin Kosleck. It's a pleasure, too, to watch the fine comic playing in THE MUMMY'S HAND of Wallace Ford and Cecil Kellaway, who were reunited a decade later for the harebrained HARVEY (1950).

"We'll begin with a reign of terror-a few murders here and there. Murders of great men, murders of little men, just to show we make no distinction. . . "

-THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933)

There's much that is new to view in irresistible. And Frank Skinner's dy- THE INVISIBLE MAN LEGACY COL-

LECTION. Claude Rains stars in James Whale's THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933), and the actor was rarely unseen to better advantage. There never was an Invisible One with a more mellifluous voice than Rains-not even Vincent Price in the immediate sequel-and Whale takes full advantage of the actor's unique delivery to strengthen the film's horror and comedy content. (Only the wickedly witty Whale would think of having the unsightly Jack Griffin unzip his trousers with the line, "This'll give them a bit of a shock!"-though Price gets off a good one to Nan Grey when he prepares to drop his pants in 1940's THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS: Better turn around. This may not be very pleasant.")

The print, unfortunately, rarely approaches the quality of the film, and is hampered by so many scratches that it sometimes looks like the actors are marionettes on strings. (This serves, however, to help hide the eenuine wires and strings lifting the various items being carried by transparent hands.) And it's unforgivable that Universal is unwilling to shell out the cost of the music originally heard on the wireless belonging to that dirty little coward, Kemp (William Harrigan), leaving us with a rinky-tink piano instead of dance music.

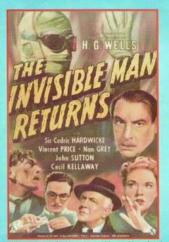
THE INVISIBLE MAN opens with a credit for the NRA-not the National Rifle Association, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration-and its slogan, "We do our part." So does Griffin, who wreaks havoc in an English village, breaks a storefront window, and proudly proclaims, "We do our part!"
THE INVISIBLE MAN (along with

the documentary HOW YOU SEE HIM: THE INVISIBLE MAN REVEALED) made its DVD debut several years ago. but THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS. THE INVISIBLE WOMAN (1941, with Virginia Bruce), INVISIBLE AGENT (1942, with a patriotic Jon Hall), and THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE (1944, with a psychotic Jon Hall) are all new to the format. They look splendid (although the clarity of DVD makes their invisibility tricks considerably more obvious) and belong in any horror enthusiast's library.

The restless seas rise, find boundaries, are contained. Now, in their warm depths, the miracle of life begins. In infinite variety, living things appear, and change, and reach the land .

-CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954)

Universal's last classic monster was good of Blackie Lagoon himself, star of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LA-GOON (1954), REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955), and THE CREA-TURE WALKS AMONG US (1956). The two sequels are fresh out of the water and served up on DVD for the first time. Both are seaworthy additions to









PAGE 32: Cajun Joe (Kurt Katch) is all choked up over the news that Universal's Mummy movies have all been rereleased on DVD. Could it at long last mark the end of THE MUMMY'S CURSE (1944)? ABOVE: Universal's splendid advertising art helped sell horror to generations, BELOW: Many of the stars of the three Creature films are still alive and swimming (and were gathered together and interviewed only two years ago for Scarlet Street), but only Lori Nelson (star of 1955's REVENGE OF THE CREATURE) took part in one of two new audio commentaries for the Legacy sets.

the Gillman saga-although the last, which offers a scathing condemnation of mankind's crimes against the environment, has all too often been dismissed as a failure. (The fact that it drastically alters the look of Blackie through surgery and destroys the Creature's ability to live in the water-the whole point of the picture, reallydoesn't sit well with monster lovers.) It must be admitted that THE CREA-TURE WALKS AMONG US does suffer from the lack of director Jack Arnold, who skillfully guided producer William Alland's first two Creature films to their tremendous success. If the final film in the trilogy suffers is less skillfully presented than the first two, it's mostly due to the absence of Arnold; Alland was still around.

In the DVD extras department, Universal's treatment of its classic horror films has been mostly hit or misshit in the early days of DVD when horror historian David J. Skal provided insightful, penetrating documentaries and commentaries on the lives, deaths, and undeaths of DRACULA. FRANKENSTEIN, and THE WOLF MAN, miss since the studio dropped Skal and replaced him with lesser lights for whom the words "insightful" and "penetrating" are an ugly threat. You'll find absolutely nothing to equal the frank, thoughtful discussion of (gasp!) James Whale's homosexuality and its effect on his work in anything post-Skal; instead, on one of the new commentary tracks, you'll hear impatient grumblings that the Gill Man doesn't show up soon enough in THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US. Just as there are those Sherlockians for

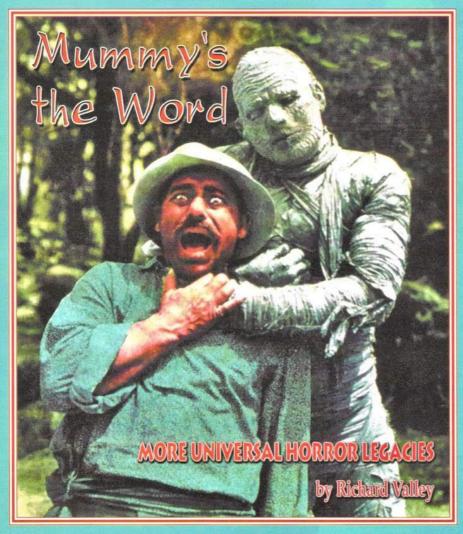
whom it needn't always be 1895 in order to enjoy Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, there are horror fans for whom it needn't always be 1959 with SHOCK THEATER on the air and HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN the greatest movie ever made because. golly, there's lots of monsters in it. Such enthusiasm is fine as far as it goes; it was the reason for Famous Monsters of Filmland back in the fifties and sixties, and for Scarlet Street today, But "as far as it goes" never goes very far-and, though the trip is short, it grows tiring and dull very quickly.

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Move over, Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Wolf Man! Here come the Mummy, the Invisible Man, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon in the three latest Legacy Collections from Universal—and they bring with them several fright films never before available on DVD!

"You will not remember what I show you now-and yet I shall awaken memories of love and crime and death.

-THE MUMMY (1932)

THE MUMMY LEGACY COLLECTION offers the King of Horror, Boris Karloff, in one of his finest portrayals, as Im-Ho-Tep in Karl Freund's THE MUMMY (1932). After Im-Ho-Tep bites-or rather, becomes the dust, Kharis takes over for a quartet of grade B treasures, first with Tom Tyler in the role for THE MUMMY'S HAND (1940), then with Lon Chaney Jr. for THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1942), THE MUMMY'S GHOST (1944), and THE MUMMY'S CURSE (1944). The Mummy pictures-in particular, the last two-are Universal Horror very nearly at its cheapest, but that's never dampened the enthusiasm of those who find the hoary plots irresistible. And Frank Skinner's dy-

namic, mesmerizing score for SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939) so permeates the series that it's the strongwilled fright fan who can watch the last of Karloff's Frankenstein films without picturing Kharis roaming the swamps of Massachusetts, the Louisiana Bayou, or the Hill of the Seven lackasses.

All five Egyptian artifacts have previously been available in the DVD format, but packaging them together serves up a veritable chorus line of horny high priests and idiotic aco--George Zucco, Eduardo Ciannelli, Turhan Bey, John Carradine, Peter Coe, and Martin Kosleck. It's a plea-sure, too, to watch the fine comic playing in THE MUMMY'S HAND of Wallace Ford and Cecil Kellaway, who were reunited a decade later for the harebrained HARVEY (1950).

"We'll begin with a reign of terror-a few murders here and there. Murders of great men, murders of little men, just to show we make no distinction. . .

-THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933)

There's much that is new to view in THE INVISIBLE MAN LEGACY COL-

LECTION. Claude Rains stars in James Whale's THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933), and the actor was rarely unseen to better advantage. There never was an Invisible One with a more mellifluous voice than Rains-not even Vincent Price in the immediate sequel—and Whale takes full advantage of the actor's unique delivery to strengthen the film's horror and comedy content. (Only the wickedly witty Whale would think of having the unsightly Jack Griffin unzip his trousers with the line, "This'll give them a bit of a shock!"—though Price gets off a good one to Nan Grey when he prepares to drop his pants in 1940's THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS: "Better turn around. This may not be very pleasant.")

The print, unfortunately, rarely approaches the quality of the film, and is hampered by so many scratches that it sometimes looks like the actors are marionettes on strings. (This serves, however, to help hide the genuine wires and strings lifting the various items being carried by transparent hands.) And it's unforgivable that Universal is unwilling to shell out the cost of the music originally heard on the wireless belonging to that dirty lit-tle coward, Kemp (William Harrigan), leaving us with a rinky-tink piano

instead of dance music.

THE INVISIBLE MAN opens with a credit for the NRA-not the National Rifle Association, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration-and its slogan, "We do our part." So does Griffin, who wreaks havoc in an English village, breaks a storefront window, and proudly pro-

claims, "We do our part!"
THE INVISIBLE MAN (along with the documentary HOW YOU SEE HIM: THE INVISIBLE MAN REVEALED) made its DVD debut several years ago, but THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN (1941, with Virginia Bruce), INVISIBLE AGENT (1942, with a patriotic Jon Hall), and THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE (1944, with a psychotic Jon Hall) are all new to the format. They look splendid (although the clarity of DVD makes their invisibility tricks considerably more obvious) and belong in any horror enthusiast's library.

The restless seas rise, find boundaries, are contained. Now, in their warm depths, the miracle of life begins. In infinite variety, living things appear, and change, and reach the land .

-CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954)

Universal's last classic monster was good ol' Blackie Lagoon himself, star of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LA-GOON (1954), REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955), and THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US (1956). The two sequels are fresh out of the water and served up on DVD for the first time. Both are seaworthy additions to









PAGE 32: Cajun Joe (Kurt Katch) is all choked up over the news that Universal's Mummy movies have all been rereleased on DVD. Could it at long last mark the end of THE MUMMY'S CURSE (1944)? ABOVE: Universal's splendid advertising art helped sell horror to generations. BELOW: Many of the stars of the three Creature films are still alive and swimming (and were gathered together and interviewed only two years ago for Scarlet Street), but only Lori Nelson (star of 1955's REVENGE OF THE CREATURE) took part in one of two new audio commentaries for the Legacy sets.

the Gillman saga-although the last, which offers a scathing condemnation of mankind's crimes against the environment, has all too often been dismissed as a failure. (The fact that it drastically alters the look of Blackie through surgery and destroys the Creature's ability to live in the water-the whole point of the picture, reallydoesn't sit well with monster lovers.) It must be admitted that THE CREA-TURE WALKS AMONG US does suffer from the lack of director Jack Arnold, who skillfully guided producer William Alland's first two Creature films to their tremendous success. If the final film in the trilogy suffers is less skillfully presented than the first two, it's mostly due to the absence of Arnold; Alland was still around.

In the DVD extras department, Universal's treatment of its classic horror films has been mostly hit or misshit in the early days of DVD when horror historian David J. Skal provided insightful, penetrating documentaries and commentaries on the lives, deaths, and undeaths of DRACULA, FRANKENSTEIN, and THE WOLF MAN, miss since the studio dropped Skal and replaced him with lesser lights for whom the words "insightful" and penetrating" are an ugly threat. You'll find absolutely nothing to equal the frank, thoughtful discussion of (gasp!) James Whale's homosexuality and its effect on his work in anything post-Skal; instead, on one of the new commentary tracks, you'll hear impatient grumblings that the Gill Man doesn't show up soon enough in THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US. Just as there are those Sherlockians for whom it needn't always be 1895 in order to enjoy Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, there are horror fans for whom it needn't always be 1959 with SHOCK THEATER on the air and HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN the greatest movie ever made because, golly, there's lots of monsters in it. Such enthusiasm is fine as far as it goes; it was the reason for Famous Monsters of Filmland back in the fifties and sixties, and for Scarlet Street today. But "as far as it goes" never goes very far—and, though the trip is short, it grows tiring and dull very quickly.

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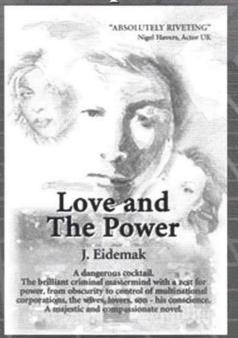


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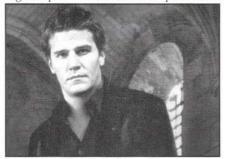
-Warren Thurston, Boggle Books

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Whedon willing to take enormous risks with his characters, most impressively with Angel himself. Angel, without Buffy in his life, matures throughout the season. Star David Boreanaz capably captures Angel's transformation, his body becoming looser, freer, and more flexible, as if he were starring in his very own live-action anime series. The brooding vampire has found inner peace and



is able to interact on a much more personal level with the associates of Angel Investigations, as well as with shadowy figures from his past—primarily Darla (Julie Benz), the vamp who sired him. The character of Darla is explored in one of the set's bonus features.

With Darla, traditional vampire mythology flies out the window—she shows up at The Hyperion Hotel, home to Angel Investigations, inexplicably pregnant! Hot on her trail (and Angel's) is the Van Helsingesque Holtz (Keith Szarabajka), a 17th-century vampire hunter, with a personal score to settle with Angel and Darla. As Darla, Benz is finally given great material to sink her fangs into,

creating a scary as well as sympathetic character on a parallel pathway to Angel's rocky road to salvation.

ANGEL lets its cast show off some special talents. Andy Hallet's Pylean demon Lorne sings an awesome "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" on a rare break from interpreting prophecies with Alexis Denisoff's take-charge Wesley, whose betrayal of Angel takes on mythical proportions. Wesley takes to sleeping with the enemy, Lilah (Stephanie Romanov), of the demonic law firm of Wolfram & Hart.

With Wesley on the dark side, an infant to care for, and Buffy (seemingly) gone forever, the unrequited relationship between Angel and Cordelia (Charisma Carpenter) is finally allowed to blossom. Carpenter astounds with her acting and comic timing. Whether snubbing Lilah with a classic Cordelia put down, or being granted an alternate reality with her very own sitcom, Carpenter delivers. Whedon wrote and directed the season's finest hour, "Waiting in the Wings," an episode in which the passion between Angel and Cordelia is explored while they investigate ghostly occurrences at the ballet.

Fox Home Video has perfectly packaged ANGEL in a sleek fold-out digipack housing six discs. Whedon delivers an informative and entertaining commentary track (for "Waiting in the Wings"), and deleted scenes, outtakes, and featurettes fill out the bonus contents. The fans and champions of ANGEL will not be disappointed.

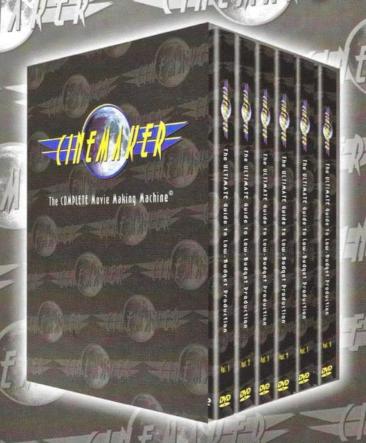
—Anthony Dale

I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE

Paramount Home Video-\$14.99 On the eve of his wedding to Marge Bradley (Gloria Talbott), hunk-and-ahalf Bill Farrell (Tom Tryon) is abducted-and replaced by an alien. Fast forward a year later and Marge and Bill's marriage isn't going very well. Bill is cold and distant. Marge is unhappy that she is still childless. Learning from Dr. Wayne (Ken Lynch) that she's perfectly capable of bearing children, Marge encourages Bill to visit the doctor, but he resists. Meanwhile, Bill learns that one of his old friends, Sam (Alan Dexter), is also no longer human. Sam informs Bill that he's needed back at the spaceship. A suspicious Marge follows her "husband" and learns his dark secret. Bill explains that the females of his species have died out and human females are needed to try prevent the ex-

tinction of his race. I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE (1958) is one of the more enjoyable late-fifties invasion pics, due in no small part to the two attractive leads. Tryon and Talbott have an interesting chemistry, especially considering that they're at odds with each other for the bulk of the film. Director Gene Fowler Jr. capably dramatizes the many creepily atmospheric moments pro-vided by Louis Vittes' intriguing script intriguing particularly due to a decidedly (if perhaps inadvertently) gay subtext. The aliens have little use for females except for procreation. They present a "normal" facade, only reveal-

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ing their true selves to each other after carefully dropping clues to their actual nature. Bill and Marge's troubled marriage easily fits the pattern of a couple confronted by the closeted nature of one of the partners. Being the late fifties however, acceptance is not an option and Bill starts expressing "normal" desires shortly before the required



vanquishment of the outsider aliens and the triumph of a strictly heterosexual humanity.

Paramount's DVD is the very definition of a bare-bones disc, offering the movie in enhanced widescreen, with chapter stops and English subtitles—and that's it. The transfer is a major improvement over cable and TV prints, with better framing and much sharper detail, and good contrast range. Unfortunately, there is a nearly constant smattering of mild scratches and debris, which becomes quite heavy on occasion. Overall though, its a fine presentation of a film that's interesting both textually and subtextually.

-Ron Morgan

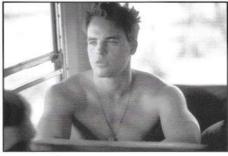
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

MGM Home Entertainment—\$14.95

JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 (2003) works fairly well as a simple horror flick. There's no denying that the Creeper (Jonathan Breck) is a darn sight—well, creepier than he was in the first film, which pretty much fell apart as soon as we saw its man-in-a-rubber-suit monster. Here, we see him less clearly and what we do see looks far, far nastier than the creature in the original.

The movie is better mounted than the original and shot in the widescreen anamorphic process, yet it's notably simpler in terms of design and its restricted location. The action centers on a schoolbus-load of meat-on-the-hoof teens, all packed together like sardines in tomato sauce for the Creeper's dining pleasure. Throw in a vengeance-crazed father (Ray Wise) whose adolescent son gets whisked away by the flying horror in the first scene, and you pretty much have the whole thing.

JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 works even better as a genuinely perverse comedy. Some of the antics on the bus—the



kids' reactions to the Creeper—must have been intentionally funny. I'd like to believe that the last scenes involving the Creeper minus a leg were also meant to be funny, since the hopping horror brought nothing to mind so much as the old Peter Cook/Dudley Moore routine with Moore as a one-legged man auditioning for the role of Tarzan. ("I have nothing against your right leg," says Cook. "Unfortunately, neither have you.")

There's yet a third level on which the movie can be considered. It's not telling tales out of school to bring up writer/director Victor Salva's legal troubles. Salva was convicted of child molestation with the star of his first feature, CLOWNHOUSE (1988). After serving his time, Salva returned to the screen with the strange POWDER (1995), at which time his past came back to haunt him—not in the least because the film dealt with high-school students. The same thing happened to one de-

Continued on page 79

Jeepers Creepers! It's Jonathan Breck

Before he became an actor, Texas native Jonathan Breck made his living selling the sort of surgical medical equipment now required by those who encounter his onscreen alter ego of The Creeper—required by those who survive, anyway. Breck has appeared in such films as I MARRIED A MONSTER (the 1998 remake of 1958's I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE), SPIDERS (2000), and FULL CIRCLE (2001), but he's best known as the baddie of JEEPERS CREEPERS (2001) and JEEPERS CREEPERS (2003). Here, he talks with Scarlet Street's Ken Hanke about his two famous fright flicks . . .

Jonathan Breck: For the first movie, we weren't able to do everything we wanted to do for budgetary reasons. The end was originally written to have this large chase, an action sequence that would last about 20 minutes and bookend the film. It had to be completely cut, so when we came back to do the second one, Victor liked to say he got to do his action piece in the sequel.

Scarlet Street: Your monster suit and makeup is considerably nastier in

the second film.

JB: The great part about doing a sequel is you learn from the first one, and what we learned is that the Creeper looks a lot better slimier—and also darker. We're honing our craft and we discovered that the Creeper looks better that way, so those were the changes we made to the Creeper's appearance. There's a slight other change, and that's with the teeth, but you'd have to look very carefully to catch that.

SS: How complex and uncomfortable

is that makeup?

JB: It's pretty uncomfortable. It's a four to six to sometimes seven hour process just to put on. That's because every piece of the Creeper as far as my face is concerned is independently applied, so that I have full movement of every feature of my face—which is great. A cheek goes on and then a chin and then an eyebrow and then an eyelid and then my nose and then blender pieces. Everything is individually applied, so it's a real process of layers.

SS: What's it like working with Victor Salva?

interviewed by Ken Hanke

JB: He's great! He's a writer as well as a director, so it's nice from an actor's standpoint because you've got everybody there in one man. He has great command of the genre. I have a lot of confidence in him as a filmmaker, and as an actor that's paramount. You have to be willing to do anything and know that you're going to come out looking all right. Also, from a collaborative point of view he's given me a lot of freedom with the character. SS: The film contains lot of peculiar religious symbolism. The first time we see him, the Creeper is in a crucifixion pose flanked by two scarecrows. For that matter, there's the issue of the initials JC. JB: I think it just happened to be a real creepy place to start. If you remember, the very first time you see the Creeper he's in a church, so I think it just makes the Creeper creepier. Those

symbols for me—those ancient symbols—have always carried a resonance and a weight. It's always creepier to me when those are brought into a movie. SS: Have you and Salva ever discussed

the Creeper's origins?

JB: We've talked a lot about it, but publicly we've tried to keep that an enigma, because-as you can imagine-that's one of the most frequently asked questions. It's what people want to know. We thought it was smart to leave his backgound basically unknown, because we really didn't want to put a fence around this character yet. As soon as you define what he is and where he comes from and what he can do, then you lose a lot of the surprise and freedom in the ways you can go with him. That really benefitted us with the second one, because we want to keep revealing more about the Creeper as we go, so that he surprises you with a new talent, a new ability.

SS: JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 ends with the prospect of the Creeper about to return to life, which looks like groundwork for

a sequel.

JB: Well, they're talking about it. Everybody involved with the first two has gotten busy, so now it's a matter of trying to get everybody back together to do another one.

SS: In the second film, the Creeper has a really nasty sense of humor and genuinely enjoys terrifying people. Was the

second film more fun from your perspective as an actor?

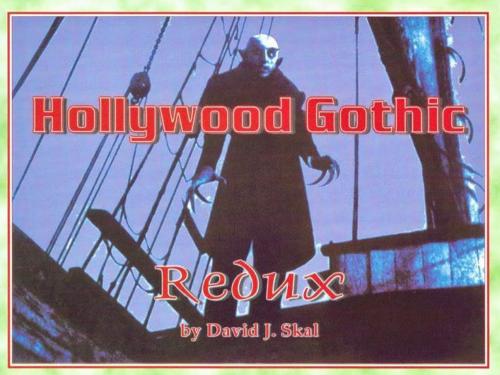
JB: Oh, yes, it was—not only from the perspective of getting to show more of the Creeper's personality, but also because I get to fly around on wires! (Laughs) It was just a blast! Plus, I got a lot more screen time in the second one. And the Creeper does have a nasty sense of humor, but it's tied into the function of how he lives. I'm able to smell my victims through their fear and the more I scare them, the more easily I'm able to smell them. I'm always looking for new and ingenious ways to terrify my victims so I can heighten my sense of smell.

SS: Did anyone expect so positive a response with the first film?

JB: No, we just thought we were gonna make a nice little low-budget horror movie and we were hoping to make money. We had no idea it was going to be as successful as it was—and that's a real credit to a lot of people, but primarily to Victor's ability as a filmmaker. Horror films are really popular for a while and then they wane, and then they get really popular again. We're riding a kind of a crest of horror right now. SS: Salva's pictures have more of a tendency toward beefcake than cheesecake, haven't they?

Continued on page 82





avid Skal's classic Dracula chronicle Hollywood Gothic has been fully revised and updated in a new edition from Faber and Faber, with some surprising new conclusions about the creator of the world's most voracious vampire. In this excerpt from the new first chapter, we learn how Bram Stoker wrestled with shifting sex roles, Oscar Wilde, and maybe even syphilis, blowing his American copyright in the bargain

Bram Stoker claimed to have spent about three years writing Dracula (1897), though he had the story much longer in mind. His earliest surviving notes for the novel date to 1890. While much of his early conception of the story would be jettisoned, one vivid scene, teeming with sexual ambiguity, persisted from conception to publication: "young man goes out-sees girls one tries-to kiss him not on the lips but throat. Old Count interferes-rage and fury diabolical. This man belongs to me I

Without specifying this scene, Stoker would later claim (as a kind of family joke, according to his son) that Dracula had its genesis in a terrifying dream brought on by a "too generous helping of dressed crab at supper one night," perhaps a tongue-in-cheek attempt to link Dracula to Mary Shelley's famous (though, like Stoker's, not entirely credible) account of her nightmare inspiration for Frankenstein (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson had similarly claimed a dream-inspiration for The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886).

Stoker's first notes were written before and during a seaside vacation at Whitby-then, as today, a uniquely picturesque fishing village in North Yorkshire where he would have been likely well-acquainted with crab, whatever its portions. Whitby emerged as a key location in the novel, its ruined abbey and windswept cliffside cemetery providing an irresistible ambience for a vampire visitation. An actual shipwreck in Whitby Harbor in 1885 provided the template for Dracula's spectral landing on British soil. The real ship was called the Dmitry; Stoker renamed it the Demeter, anagramming the real ship's port of sail, Narva, as "Varna." He made detailed notes of tombstone inscriptions in the abbey's cemetery, and recorded colorful examples of local dialect. And it was in the Whitby subscription library that Stoker came across a history book reference to the 15th century Wallachian warlord Vlad Tepes, aka "Dracula," meaning "son of the devil."

The working notes for Dracula, now owned by the Rosenbach Library and Museum in Philadelphia, outline a messy potboiler with far too many characters and an overcomplicated plot. At just what point these crystallized into tight, archetypal drama is not precisely known, but the notes span the years from 1890 to 1896. The Dracula notes, with their abundance of overlapping characters, offer one of the few tangible insights into Stoker's working methods and suggest a connection between theme and process. Just as his finished work deals time and again with doubles and dualities, so too does his working imagination split, merge, and shuffle fictional identities, as if testing the myriad possibilities. For example, Dracula's now famous nemesis, Abraham Van Helsing, originally had his identity divided among three preliminary characters. Given Stoker's amazing literary output-18 books, most completed during a period of all-consuming professional commitment to the Lyceum Theatre-it is not unreasonable to assume

that he worked rapidly, with more feverish inspiration than careful design.

The only direct accounts of Stoker writing Dracula were made by his wife Florence, and his son Noel, long after the fact. Noel Stoker told biographer Harry Ludlam that his father was "very testy" during the book's composition. In 1926, Florence wrote, "My late husband used to read his stories over to me as they were written, and Dracula was by no means least among those which revealed to me the supernormal imagination of the writer." The following year, a press story quoted some further recollections: "When he was at work on Dracula, we were all frightened of him. It was up on a lonely part of the east coast of Scotland, and he seemed to get obsessed by the spirit of the thing. There he would sit for hours, like a great bat, perched on the rocks of the shore or wander alone up and down the sandhills, thinking it out."

The seaside location was Cruden Bay, where Stoker and his family first vacationed in the summer of 1893. It is likely that a working manuscript of the novel began to take shape that year, since Stoker claimed to have spent three years formally writing the book, and the 1893 calendar coincides with Dracula's internal dating and several contemporary references.

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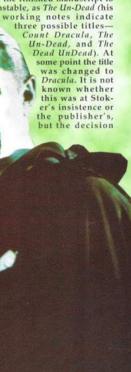
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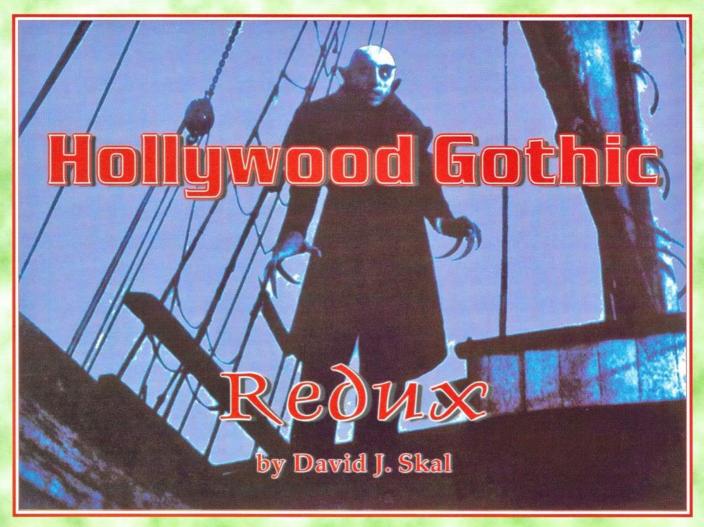
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Whatever his methods, inspirations, or editorial assistance. Stoker submitted the finished manuscript to his publisher, Archibald Constable, as The Un-Dead (his





avid Skal's classic Dracula chronicle Hollywood Gothic has been fully revised and updated in a new edition from Faber and Faber, with some surprising new conclusions about the creator of the world's most voracious vampire. In this excerpt from the new first chapter, we learn how Bram Stoker wrestled with shifting sex roles, Oscar Wilde, and maybe even syphilis, blowing his American copyright in the bargain

Bram Stoker claimed to have spent about three years writing Dracula (1897), though he had the story much longer in mind. His earliest surviving notes for the novel date to 1890. While much of his early conception of the story would be jettisoned, one vivid scene, teeming with sexual ambiguity, persisted from conception to publication: "young man goes out—sees girls one tries—to kiss him not on the lips but throat. Old Count interferes—rage and fury diabolical. This man belongs to me I want him."

Without specifying this scene, Stoker would later claim (as a kind of family joke, according to his son) that Dracula had its genesis in a terrifying dream brought on by a "too generous helping of dressed crab at supper one night," perhaps a tongue-in-cheek attempt to link Dracula to Mary Shelley's famous (though, like Stoker's, not entirely credible) account of her nightmare inspiration for Frankenstein (1818). Robert Louis Stevenson had similarly claimed a dream-inspiration for The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886).

Stoker's first notes were written before and during a seaside vacation at Whitby—then, as today, a uniquely picturesque fishing village in North Yorkshire where he would have been likely well-acquainted with crab,

whatever its portions. Whitby emerged as a key location in the novel, its ruined abbey and windswept cliffside cemetery providing an irresistible ambience for a vampire visitation. An actual shipwreck in Whitby Harbor in 1885 provided the template for Dracula's spectral landing on British soil. The real ship was called the Dmitry; Stoker renamed it the Demeter, anagramming the real ship's port of sail, Narva, as "Varna." He made detailed notes of tombstone inscriptions in the mabbey's cemetery, and recorded colorful examples of local dialect. And it was in the Whitby subscription library that Stoker came across a history book reference to the 15th century Wallachian warlord Vlad Tepes, aka "Dracula," meaning "son of the devil."

The working notes for Dracula, now owned by the Rosenbach Library and Museum in Philadelphia, outline a messy potboiler with far too many characters and an overcomplicated plot. At just what point these crystallized into tight, archetypal drama is not precisely known, but the notes span the years from 1890 to 1896. The Dracula notes, with their abundance of overlapping characters, offer one of the few tangible insights into Stoker's working methods and suggest a connection between theme and process. Just as his finished work deals time and again with doubles and dualities, so too does his working imagination split, merge, and shuffle fictional identities, as if testing the myriad possibilities. For example, Dracula's now famous nemesis, Abraham Van Helsing, originally had his identity divided among three preliminary characters. Given Stoker's amazing literary output-18 books, most completed during a period of all-consuming professional commitment to the Lyceum Theatre-it is not unreasonable to assume

that he worked rapidly, with more feverish inspiration

than careful design.

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was fortuitous—the one-word title itself, the three sinister syllables that crack and undulate on the tongue, ambiguously foreign but somehow alluring—would be an undeniable component of the book's initial and

continued mystique.

Dracula is a radically different book at the turn of the 21st century than it was in 1897; though the text has not been altered, its context has been transformed-and transformed substantially. Attempts to make sense of its author's intentions are particularly difficult since the notes and manuscript are unaccompanied by journals, diaries, or letters that might reveal Stoker's state of mind, and there is a relative dearth of biographical information. In all likelihood he considered the book no more than an entertainment, a page-turning thriller. Stoker's serious critics are virtually unanimous in their conclusion that Dracula was in part the product of unconscious influences, and not a totally controlled work. Stoker's voluminous correspondence on behalf of Henry Irving (he said that he wrote as many as 50 letters a day, and as many as half a million during the 26 years of his employment) as well as his own prolific fictional output suggests that he could produce prose with a facility approaching automatic writing.

The interpretive conundrums thus raised are nearly overwhelming. If Stoker didn't intend a larger meaning, can such a meaning be legitimately imposed? Dracula has, for instance, come to be regarded in many quarters as a tantalizing Rosetta Stone of the darker aspects of the Victorian psyche, and, indeed, serves the function admirably, as hundreds of scholarly articles and studies will attest. But Dracula can also be read fruitfully as a Christian allegory (or parody), as a parable of cultural xenophobia, as an occult text, or as a thinly veiled Darwinian or even Marxist tract. The inescapable conclusion is that Bram Stoker, working in a largely intuitive manner, but no doubt propelled by more than a few personal demons, managed to tap a well of archetypal motifs so deep and persistent that they can assume the shape of almost any critical container.

Dracula was published by Constable on May 26, 1897, with no literary theorists in sight. Stoker had already arranged a marathon staged reading of the book at the Lyceum on the morning of May 18, ostensibly to protect his interest in a dramatic copyright. Such readings were common in Stoker's time, but their value in preventing the stage piracy of literary works was not universally acknowledged. The Stage, for instance, called them "absurd 'productions' given for the purpose of securing stage rights," and urged some "bold, bad man" to challenge the practice with an unlicensed adaptation. "Then managers and authors will see the wisdom of going about the matter of 'production in accordance its laterary."

with the law' in a more sensible manner."

In any event, the Lyceum briefly became Stoker's own macabre toy theater, though the brevity may well have felt like an eternity. The reading was stupefyingly long—five acts and 47 scenes, lasting more than five hours. Stoker biographer Barbara Belford states (intriguingly, but with no documentation) that Stoker hung the stage with settings for Irving's MACBETH, a production then in storage. Lyceum records show that the standing sets on May 18, 1897 were for Victorien Sardou and Emile Moreau's comedy MADAME SANS-GÊNES, in which the imposing Henry Irving played a diminutive Napoleon, aided by oversized furniture and other perspective tricks to diminish his height.

The task of being the first actor to impersonate Dracula on stage fell to a "Mr. Jones," who, according to the best evidence, was T. Arthur Jones, a supporting member of the Lyceum company. Edith Craig, the daughter of Henry Irving's leading lady Ellen Terry, read the role of Mina. The parts of Jonathan Harker and Abra-

ham Van Helsing were interpreted by Herbert Passmore and Tom Reynolds. Eleven other actors took part, mostly from the ranks of salaried Lyceum players, but a few were completely unknown, perhaps just friends of the author.

The "script" Stoker later submitted to the Lord Chamberlain (the office that approved and licensed all stage productions in England) was an elaborate cut-andpaste of printer's galleys, heavily emended in holograph by Stoker. As a stage play, it is simultaneously ludicrous and oddly (if incompetently) earnest. In reconceiving his book for the stage, Stoker faced the same obstacles that would frustrate later adaptors—the novel's geographical sweep and scope, coupled with its wordy, epistolary format pose distinct problems for the theater. For instance, to set the scene outside Dracula's castle, Stoker is forced to give Jonathan Harker a breathless opening speech that is almost a parody of melodramatic exposition.

Harker: Hi! Hi! Where are you off to! Gone already! (knocks at door) Well, this is a pretty nice state of things! After a drive through solid darkness with an unknown man whose face I have not seen and who has in his hand the strength of 20 men and who can drive back a pack of wolves by holding up his hand; who visits mysterious blue flames and who wouldn't speak a word that he could help, to be left here in the dark before a—a ruin. Upon my life I'm beginning my professional experience in a romantic way!

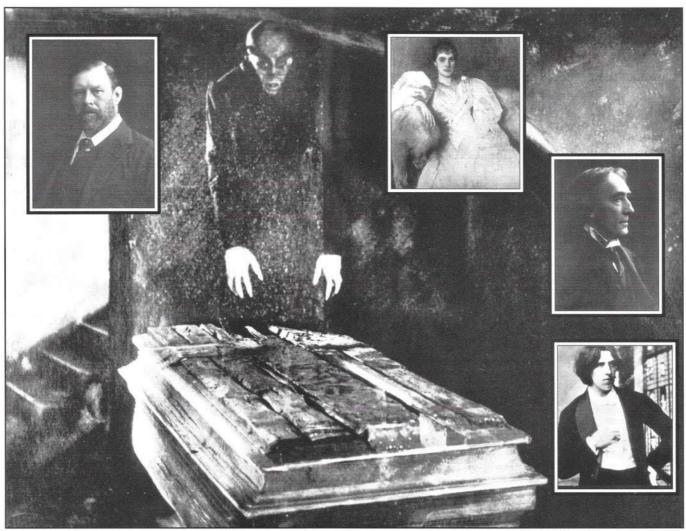
Any hopes Stoker may have had to impress his employer with dramaturgical skill came to naught in a scene recounted by his biographer and great-nephew Daniel Farson: "Legend has it that Sir Henry entered the theater during the reading and listened for a few moments with a warning glint of amusement. `What do you think of it?' someone asked him unwisely, as he left for his dressing room. `Dreadful!' came the devastating reply, projected with such resonance that it filled the theater."

The idea that Stoker created Dracula with Henry Irving in mind—either as a potential Irving stage role, or, more darkly, as a resentful, revengeful caricature of a domineering, life-draining employer—has become such a deeply ingrained part of the Dracula legend that it is often difficult to separate hard fact from reasonable assumption from totally unsupportable speculation. The image of Stoker as Jonathan Harker, locked up in the Lyceum "castle," forced to do the bidding of a boss literally from hell, makes for a good story and a glib, if irresistible soundbite.

But is it true?

Evidence bolsters the notion that Stoker at some point envisioned Irving as Dracula on stage, and openly talked about it, at least after the book's publication. According to Chicago drama critic Frederick Donaghey, who made the writer's acquaintance during one of Irving's turn-of-the-century tours, "When the late Bram Stoker told me that he had put in endless hours in trying to persuade Henry Irving to have had a play made from Dracula and to act in it, he added that he had nothing in mind save the box office. 'If,' he explained, 'I am able to afford to have my name on the book, the Governor [as Irving was familiarly known] certainly can afford, with business bad, to have his name on the play, But he laughs whenever I talk about it; and then we have to go out and raise money to put on something in which the public has no interest."

Stoker went on to tell Donaghey his conception of Irving as the King of Vampires: "The Governor as Dracula would be the Governor in a composite of so many of



PAGE 38: Graf Orlok (Max Schreck) belts out a quick chorus of "Am I Blue?" in F. W. Murnau's NOS-FERATU (1922). PAGE 39: Bela Lugosi goes heavy on the mascara for the Broadway production of DRACULA (1927). ABOVE: Orlok (otherwise known as Count Dracula) is surrounded by (clockwise from left) the man who wrote *Dracula*, Bram Stoker; the Victorian beauty who suppressed NOSFERATU, Florence Stoker; the theatrical star who refused to play the Lord of the Undead, Sir Henry Irving; and the gay playwright who once hoped to marry Florence, Oscar Wilde.

the parts in which he has been liked—Matthias in THE BELLS, Shylock, Mephistopheles, Peter the Great, the bad fellow in THE LYONS MAIL, Louis XI, and ever so many others, including Iachimo in CYMBERLINE. But he just laughs at me!"

Stoker was correct in anticipating the theatrical possibilities of his story, though they would not be realized in his lifetime. But documented evidence that Irving himself was the primary inspiration for the vampire is essentially nonexistent—decades of critical and bio-

graphical assertions to the contrary.

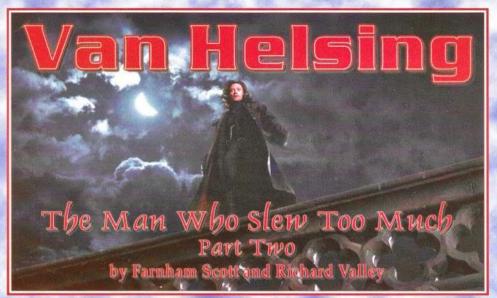
However, Stoker certainly had reason to believe Irving might be interested in another supernatural role, and, perhaps, involve him in the process. In 1878, Irving had enlisted Stoker to help revise the problematic text of VANDERDECKEN, based on the Flying Dutchman legend. Despite the deficiencies of the script, Irving played the part memorably, with eyes that "really seemed to shine like cinders of glowing coal glowing red from out the marble face"—the identical gaze cast by Count Dracula, the living-dead captain of another phantom ship. Stoker also described Irving's "ghastly pallor," his eyes shining with "the wild glamour of the lost—in his every tone and action there is the stamp of death. Herein lies the terror—we can call it by no other name—of the play. The

chief actor is not quick but dead." Or, in a word that Stoker was to coin and make immortal for a public far less rarified than that of the Lyceum, "un-dead."

"I believed in the subject," wrote Stoker of the Dutchman legend, "and always wanted [Irving] to try it again—the play, of course, being tinkered into something like good shape, or a new play altogether written." Instead of enlisting Stoker's direct creative input, Irving proposed the project to Hall Caine. According to Stoker, "Irving had a great opinion of Caine's imagination and always said he would write a great work of weirdness some day." As Caine wrote, "During many years I spent time and energy and some imagination in an effort to fit Irving with a part . . . I remember that most of our subjects dealt with the supernatural, and that the Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman, and the Demon Lover were themes around which our imagination constantly revolved."

Caine instead proposed an alternate, but closely related subject. In 1895 he had published a narrative poem called "Graih my Chree" (Manx for "Love of my Heart," though the poem itself was written in English). It was a variation on the traditional Scottish ballad "The Demon Lover" about a woman seduced into leaving her hus-

Continued on page 74



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Initially, Cushing was less happy with the direction his own characterization had to take. It had originally been his intention to play Abraham Van Helsing as described by Bram Stoker in Dracula (1897), but Hammer had other ideas. "We had a meeting about that, cause it bothered me quite a bit. I said, 'Look, here's the description-a little old man who speaks double Dutch. But at the time, I'd become pretty well known and popular, and they said, 'We think, from the point of view of commercialism, that you should play it as you are. It would be silly to put makeup all over you; there's no need.' So that's how it came about. I agreed with that, otherwise they could have got any actor who could have played it as it should have been. He's quite a little man in the story, isn't he? And really fussy!"

Revamping Van Helsing as a younger, physically active opponent made it possible for him to take a far more vigorous part in Dracula's final destruction, including a mad dash along a lengthy table and a leap onto the window curtains, pulling them down in order to flood the castle with sunlight.

"It would have been a pity not to have it," said Cushing of that thrilling stunt, "because I always think that sort of excitement is wonderful in a film. And one's got to bear in mind that not all that many people would have read the book, would they? Of all the millions of people who go to the theater, I should think at the most a quarter of them would have read the book. That was a lovely bit of theater, wasn't it, in the finale of DRACULA?

"You may not believe it, but we have had gay times here . .

-THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960)

In a 1991 Scarlet Street interview, Christopher Lee remembered his Hammer horror films with a mixture of fondness and remorse. "What I regret, particularly with the Dracula pictures, is that the quality of the story and the placement of the character within the framework of the story, went steadily downhill. 'Write the story first-oh, now, what are we going to do with the character? We've got to fit him in somewhere . .

What Hammer ultimately did in THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), its first and finest sequel to HORROR OF DRACULA (1958), was to fit him in nowhere.

Though Hammer and Universal trafficked in the same classic creatures-Frankenstein's Monster, Kharis the Mummy, Count Dracula-only rarely did the British company emulate the style of its American precursor. (A notable exception is 1964's THE EVIL OF FRANKEN-STEIN, the result of a deal between the two studios.) It was pure coincidence that THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, like Universal's first sequel to DRACULA (1931), was notable for the absence of the Vampire King-and the

presence of Abraham Van Helsing. With DRACULA'S DAUGHTER (1936), Bela Lugosi had found himself relegated to the sidelines, replaced by a waxen "standin" destroyed in a bonfire by the Count's titular offspring. (Lugosi made approximately the same salary for not starring in DRACULA'S DAUGHTER that he'd made for starring in DRACULA!) With THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, Christopher Lee, like Lugosi, was dropped from the story and Peter Cushing, like Edward Van Sloan, took a leading role as Stoker's redoubtable vampire hunter.

THE BRIDES OF DRACULA originally began life as a Jimmy Sangster screenplay titled DISCIPLE OF DRAC-ULA and featured the Count in a brief cameo appearance, summoned from beyond to destroy his errant acolyte, Baron Meinster. Sangster's script passed to Peter Bryan with the edict to entirely omit Dracula from the action. The result was a script titled THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, which an unimpressed Peter Cushing resolutely refused to play. It was back to the drawing board, with Cushing suggesting playwright Edward Percy for a rewrite (very little of Percy was used), producer Anthony Hinds making most of the alterations himself, and the script emerging as DRACULA II-an even odder title than THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, since Dracula was still nowhere in sight.

Replacing Dracula as the film's primary menaceand inadvertently setting the style for blonde, sexually ambiguous bloodsuckers to come, from Herbert Von

Krolock (Iain Quarrier) in THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS (1967) to the Vampire Lestat in Anne Rice's endless Vampire Chronicles, to Lestat (Tom Cruise) and Louis (Brad Pitt) in INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE (1994)-was Baron Meinster, played to perfection by David Peel. With the help of Roy Ashton's subtle makeup, the actor, 40 at the time, looked considerably younger than his years. This Dorian Grayish quality, combined with Peel's own homosexuality and a script that called for Meinster to incestuously drain his own mother (Martita Hunt) of blood, added a fresh new slant to screen vampirism-kinky sex. (Again, Hammer inadvertently drew on Universal's DRACULA'S DAUGH-TER, with its famous scene of lesbian seduction.) Though the film takes pains to make Marianne Danielle (played by "France's newest sex kitten," Yvonne Monlaur) the

object of his affliction, Meinster's gay bent is inferred

throughout-from the likelihood that, as the Count's

disciple, he was initiated into the cult of the undead by

Dracula, a male (this isn't spelled out, Baroness Meinster only lamenting that Sonny got in with the wrong crowd), to the fact that he plants the world's grossest hickey on Van Helsing shortly before the climactic conflagration. Then, too, it's made manifest that the Baroness, like Violet Venable (Katharine Hepburn) in SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER (1959), feeds her child's unholy appetite (blood for the Baron, sex with boys for Sebastian Venable) by luring victims to Chateau Meinster. Little wonder that for decades The New York Times, in its capsule television review, likened BRIDES to something out of Tennessee Williams!

"David Peel," remembered Peter Cushing, "was an awfully nice chap who left the business soon after THE BRIDES OF DRACULA. He was always a very religious man, and I think he went into the church in some way, and he was also in properties. I think that was one reason why he gave up the business. It was quite a good picture, a very popular one. And I thought it was a very clever ending, with the shadow of the cross made by the windmill . .

Cushing's Van Helsing is even more robust in BRIDES than he was in HORROR OF DRACULA. As in the first film-and, for that matter, Stoker's novel-Van Helsing makes a late entrance following a first act that sets up the menace he's destined to confront. Once he appears, though, he holds center stage, dashing this way and that after Meinster's vampire brides (played by Andree Melly and Marie Devereux), ducking a gigantic (and sadly fake) bat, and leaping onto one of the windmill's blades. For all his trepidations about the script, Cushing also gets to spout some of the subtlest dialogue ever found in a horror film, most memorably in an exchange with the stately Martita Hunt:

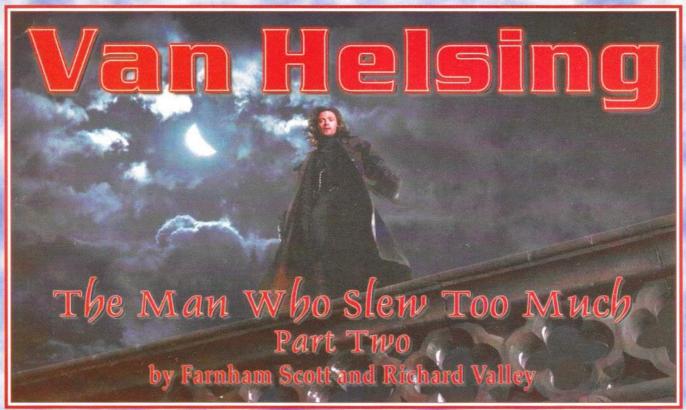
Baroness: Who is it that is not afraid? Van Helsing: Only God has no fear, Baroness: Why have you come here? Van Helsing: To find your son. Baroness: Then you know who I am. Van Helsing: I know who you were . . .

BRIDES' original finale had Van Helsing calling on the forces of evil in the form of a swarm of bats to destroy the Baron, who'd broken one of the cardinal rules in The Vampire's Handbook by infecting his mother. Cushing argued that Van Helsing, whose weapons of choice included the crucifix and holy water, would never

PAGE 42: Hugh Jackman strikes a dynamic rooftop pose as VAN HELSING (2004). BOTTOM LEFT: Dr. Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) arrives at a sinister (if colorful) castle intent on destroying the HORROR OF DRACULA (1958). RIGHT: Baroness Meinster (Martita Hunt) has been vampirized by her own son in THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), but Van Helsing points the way toward her salvation.







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—Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (1972)

eter Cushing recalled in his 1993 interview with Scarlet Street that "Hammer did it awfully well with HORROR OF DRACULA. Christopher Lee came on, the perfect gentleman, giving the chap dinner, and saying, 'If there's anything you want, let me know.' And then a few shots later, suddenly he appeared while one of the girls was having a go at John Van Eyssen, and old Dracula came in and was rather cross. He was quite terrifying, the way he came in there like a steam train. Christopher gave it such a physical presence, yes? A physical presence which was attractive to women, but also with enormous strength, physical strength. He was absolutely brilliant as Dracula."

Initially, Cushing was less happy with the direction his own characterization had to take. It had originally been his intention to play Abraham Van Helsing as described by Bram Stoker in Dracula (1897), but Hammer had other ideas. "We had a meeting about that, 'cause it bothered me quite a bit. I said, 'Look, here's the description—a little old man who speaks double Dutch. But at the time, I'd become pretty well known and popular, and they said, 'We think, from the point of view of commercialism, that you should play it as you are. It would be silly to put makeup all over you; there's no need.' So that's how it came about. I agreed with that, otherwise they could have got any actor who could have played it as it should have been. He's quite a little man in the story, isn't he? And really fussy!"

Revamping Van Helsing as a younger, physically active opponent made it possible for him to take a far more vigorous part in Dracula's final destruction, including a mad dash along a lengthy table and a leap onto the window curtains, pulling them down in order to flood the castle with sunlight.

"It would have been a pity not to have it," said Cushing of that thrilling stunt, "because I always think that sort of excitement is wonderful in a film. And one's got to bear in mind that not all that many people would have read the book, would they? Of all the millions of people who go to the theater, I should think at the most a quarter of them would have read the book. That was a lovely bit of theater, wasn't it, in the finale of DRACULA?"

"You may not believe it, but we have had gay times here . . ."

—THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960)

In a 1991 Scarlet Street interview, Christopher Lee remembered his Hammer horror films with a mixture of fondness and remorse. "What I regret, particularly with the Dracula pictures, is that the quality of the story and the placement of the character within the framework of the story, went steadily downhill. 'Write the story first—oh, now, what are we going to do with the character? We've got to fit him in somewhere...'"

What Hammer ultimately did in THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), its first and finest sequel to HORROR OF DRACULA (1958), was to fit him in nowhere.

Though Hammer and Universal trafficked in the same classic creatures—Frankenstein's Monster, Kharis the Mummy, Count Dracula—only rarely did the British company emulate the style of its American precursor. (A notable exception is 1964's THE EVIL OF FRANKEN-STEIN, the result of a deal between the two studios.) It was pure coincidence that THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, like Universal's first sequel to DRACULA (1931), was notable for the absence of the Vampire King—and the

presence of Abraham Van Helsing. With DRACULA'S DAUGHTER (1936), Bela Lugosi had found himself relegated to the sidelines, replaced by a waxen "standin" destroyed in a bonfire by the Count's titular offspring. (Lugosi made approximately the same salary for not starring in DRACULA'S DAUGHTER that he'd made for starring in DRACULA!) With THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, Christopher Lee, like Lugosi, was dropped from the story and Peter Cushing, like Edward Van Sloan, took a leading role as Stoker's redoubtable vampire hunter.

THE BRIDES OF DRACULA originally began life as a Jimmy Sangster screenplay titled DISCIPLE OF DRACULA and featured the Count in a brief cameo appearance, summoned from beyond to destroy his errant acolyte, Baron Meinster. Sangster's script passed to Peter Bryan with the edict to entirely omit Dracula from the action. The result was a script titled THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, which an unimpressed Peter Cushing resolutely refused to play. It was back to the drawing board, with Cushing suggesting playwright Edward Percy for a rewrite (very little of Percy was used), producer Anthony Hinds making most of the alterations himself, and the script emerging as DRACULA II—an even odder title than THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, since Dracula was still nowhere in sight.

Replacing Dracula as the film's primary menaceand inadvertently setting the style for blonde, sexually ambiguous bloodsuckers to come, from Herbert Von Krolock (Iain Quarrier) in THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS (1967) to the Vampire Lestat in Anne Rice's endless Vampire Chronicles, to Lestat (Tom Cruise) and Louis (Brad Pitt) in INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE (1994)—was Baron Meinster, played to perfection by David Peel. With the help of Roy Ashton's subtle makeup, the actor, 40 at the time, looked considerably younger than his years. This Dorian Grayish quality, combined with Peel's own homosexuality and a script that called for Meinster to incestuously drain his own mother (Martita Hunt) of blood, added a fresh new slant to screen vampirism-kinky sex. (Again, Hammer inadvertently drew on Universal's DRACULA'S DAUGH-TER, with its famous scene of lesbian seduction.) Though the film takes pains to make Marianne Danielle (played by "France's newest sex kitten," Yvonne Monlaur) the object of his affliction, Meinster's gay bent is inferred throughout-from the likelihood that, as the Count's disciple, he was initiated into the cult of the undead by

Dracula, a male (this isn't spelled out, Baroness Meinster only lamenting that Sonny got in with the wrong crowd), to the fact that he plants the world's grossest hickey on Van Helsing shortly before the climactic conflagration. Then, too, it's made manifest that the Baroness, like Violet Venable (Katharine Hepburn) in SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER (1959), feeds her child's unholy appetite (blood for the Baron, sex with boys for Sebastian Venable) by luring victims to Chateau Meinster. Little wonder that for decades *The New York Times*, in its capsule television review, likened BRIDES to something out of Tennessee Williams!

"David Peel," remembered Peter Cushing, "was an awfully nice chap who left the business soon after THE BRIDES OF DRACULA. He was always a very religious man, and I think he went into the church in some way, and he was also in properties. I think that was one reason why he gave up the business. It was quite a good picture, a very popular one. And I thought it was a very clever ending, with the shadow of the cross made by the windmill..."

Cushing's Van Helsing is even more robust in BRIDES than he was in HORROR OF DRACULA. As in the first film—and, for that matter, Stoker's novel—Van Helsing makes a late entrance following a first act that sets up the menace he's destined to confront. Once he appears, though, he holds center stage, dashing this way and that after Meinster's vampire brides (played by Andree Melly and Marie Devereux), ducking a gigantic (and sadly fake) bat, and leaping onto one of the windmill's blades. For all his trepidations about the script, Cushing also gets to spout some of the subtlest dialogue ever found in a horror film, most memorably in an exchange with the stately Martita Hunt:

Baroness: Who is it that is not afraid? Van Helsing: Only God has no fear, Baroness: Why have you come here? Van Helsing: To find your son. Baroness: Then you know who I am. Van Helsing: I know who you were . . .

BRIDES' original finale had Van Helsing calling on the forces of evil in the form of a swarm of bats to destroy the Baron, who'd broken one of the cardinal rules in *The Vampire's Handbook* by infecting his mother. Cushing argued that Van Helsing, whose weapons of choice included the crucifix and holy water, would never

PAGE 42: Hugh Jackman strikes a dynamic rooftop pose as VAN HELSING (2004). BOTTOM LEFT: Dr. Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) arrives at a sinister (if colorful) castle intent on destroying the HORROR OF DRACULA (1958). RIGHT: Baroness Meinster (Martita Hunt) has been vampirized by her own son in THE BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), but Van Helsing points the way toward her salvation.









LEFT: Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) puts out the sex kitten when he helps Marianne Danielle (Yvonne Monlaur) escape from a burning mill at the conclusion of THE BRIDES OF DRACULA. RIGHT: Count Dracula (Leslie Nielsen) flashes a toothy grin as he romances Mina Murray (Amy Yasbeck) in DRACULA DEAD AND LOVING IT (1995).

resort to evil to defeat his enemy. Out went the bat attack, only to turn up three years later in THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE (1963).

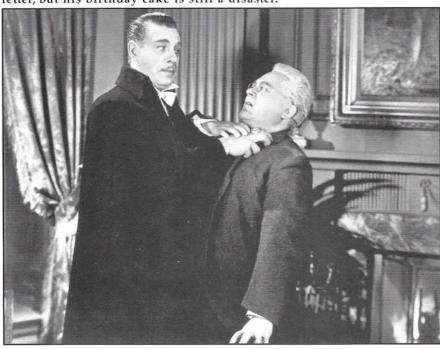
"There is no hope left . . ."
—tagline for THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA
(1974)

Before resurrecting the Vampire King in the sepulchral person of John Carradine for HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944) and HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945), Universal stole

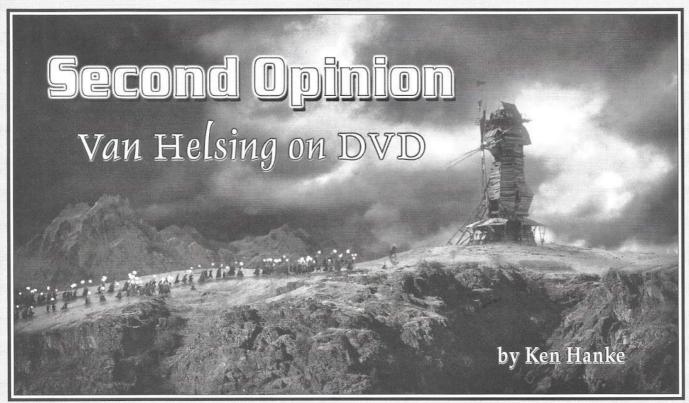
another bat from the family belfry for their third Dracula film—SON OF DRACULA (1943), which pitted Count Alucard (Lon Chaney Jr.) against the decidedly Van Helsingesque Professor Laszlo (40-year-old J. Edward Bromberg, his hair grayed to lend dignity and stature). On the other claw, Hammer's third Dracula—DRACULA: PRINCE OF DARKNESS (1966)—returned the Count himself to the screen, rendering him mute with indignation in the process. Again portrayed by Christopher Lee, the Lord of the Undead found himself with no Van Helsing with

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LEFT: As Count Alucard (spell it backwards) in SON OF DRACULA (1943), Lon Chaney Jr. gets a stranglehold on Professor Laszlo (J. Edward Bromberg). The Count thinks he can fool his Louisiana neighbors by simply reversing the letters in his name, proving himself not only a bloodsucker, but a daehkcolb. RIGHT: In BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA (1992), Van Helsing (Anthony Hopkins) follows the directions in his cookbook to the letter, but his birthday cake is still a disaster.







As a horror movie geek, I am supposed to hate VAN HELSING (2004) and call it a travesty of a mockery of two shams of a fraud as concerns its desecration of the classic horror films from Universal in the 1930s. And, truth to tell, were I to hold it up against those films—a number of which I've watched recently since Universal brought out a box-set to tie in with VAN HELSING's release—it would indeed be wanting.

However, while VAN HELSING does evoke the 1930s films-its opening is a deliberate homage to James Whale's FRANKENSTEIN (1931)—its primary inspiration lies in the studio's late-inthe-day "monster rally" pictures of the 1940s. By then, the horror film had degenerated into something far less glorious than the original films. Inspiration was replaced by desperation and, in order to keep the horror franchise go-ing, the Frankenstein Monster met the Wolf Man. When this goosed the sagging returns, it was decided to throw all the monsters into one film, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944), which gave us the Monster, the Wolf Man, Dracula, a hunchback, and a mad doctor. (As planned, Kharis the Mummy, the Mad Ghoul, Dracula's son, Count Alucard, were supposed to show up, too, but, blessedly, no one could make this practical.) HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN was virtually duplicated the following year with HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945), and then sent up three years later with ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948).

Despite their many pleasures, it would be a stretch to call the films in question high art—though they had their moments of high artistry—and these are the films that Stephen

Sommers' VAN HELSING most resembles, albeit in 2004 terms. It hardly disgraces those films, though it does lack their cheapjack charms. (It's sobering to realize that Sommers' film cost far more to make than the combined price tags of the entire classic canon from 1931 through 1948.) VAN HELSING is an Event Movie—for good or ill—in every sense of the word. It has all the subtlety of a runaway train hurtling down the Matterhorn.

It's amusing to consider the way things have changed over the years. The Universal horrors of the forties are now praised for their subtlety, but at the time of their release, these films were dismissed by the makers of the far subtler horrors of the RKO Val Lewton movies (1942's CAT PEOPLE) as anything but. "At Universal, the prevailing idea of horror was a werewolf chasing a girl in her nightgown up a tree," opined Lewton director Mark Robson. And that's pretty much Sommers' approach—in a not wholly successful post-modern manner.

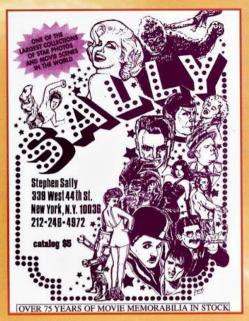
Not content with just rethinking the old Universal monster flicks and even dragging in Paramount's DR. JEK-YLL AND MR. HYDE (1931) for seasoning, Sommers has cobbled together a patchwork movie that's a kind of repository of pop culture. His Gabriel Van Helsing (Hugh Jackman) has less in common with the old Abraham Van Helsing of yore than he has with James Bond, something that seems to annoy a lot of people—perhaps because it isn't spelled out. Maybe if he introduced himself as "Helsing . . . Van Helsing," folks would get the joke that he's meant to be the James Bond of the monster-fighting world. That, in fact,

may be the problem with the whole whiz-bang movie—it's not campy enough. When Dracula's obligatory three wives resemble nothing so much as back-up singers for a rock group, it's probably wisest to just go all the way with the idea and play it for comedic effect.

Sommers keeps striving for a signifi-cance that his film and its concept can't contain, which isn't surprising since, at 132 minutes, it can't even manage to explain its story. He's at his worst when he tries for significance. While Richard Roxburgh's Count Dracula grew on me over the course of the film, Sommers affords him a "big moment" designed to lend the character some depth that is not only tedious, but embarrassingly bad. As the Frankenstein Monster, Shuler Hensley (who once played "Poor" Jud to Hugh Jackman's Curly in OKLAHOMA!) comes closest to creating a well-rounded character of some pathos. The rest only seem to have pathos because Sommers' script says so-but then the script says a lot of things that don't really work or are unexplained. Why is Van Helsing apparently immortal? Why do vampires produce gargoyles when they breed? Why exactly does Dracula need to shoot electricity through the Monster to bring his spawn to life? I'm not sure it really matters, but it would matter less if the film had the courage of its convictions to be pure popcorn junk without half-hearted stabs at depth.

For horror fans, VAN HELSING ought to get points for evoking FRANKEN-STEIN and BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935), along with nods to PHANTOM

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VAN HELSING

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which to play cat and mouse, but in the doctor's place was a priest (Andrew Kier as Father Sandor) wise in the ways of slaving, and for an added treat the film featured a Renfield takeoff named Ludwig (played by Hammer regular Thorley Walters). Lee carried on biting in DRAC-ULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE (1968), TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA (1970), and SCARS OF DRAC-III.A (1970), and then Hammer came up with the notion of updating the series to the swinging London of the 1970s and introducing Peter Cushing as not Abraham, but Lorrimer Van Helsing. The film was DRACULA A.D.

Peter Cushing recalled with amusement that Christopher Lee wasn't exactly thrilled with the change of direction. "They brought them up to date and set them in contemporary times, and Christopher said, 'I refuse to be seen sitting on the number nine bus going down Kensington Heights!"

Happily-or not, depending on one's view-Lee got his wish, and the film's one reasonably original idea is virtually ignored. Brought back to undead life by Johnny Alucard (Christopher Neame), Dracula nevertheless forgoes the night life of an England that swings like a pendulum do, remaining grumpily ensconced in a desecrated church. In many respects-the church, the disciple who procures Dracula's remains and gives him an extreme makeover-DRACULA A.D. 1972 is merely a retread of TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA, the one previous film in the series to be set in England, albeit a Victorian England. Johnny Alucard, though not an actual vampire, echoes the blonde androgyny of THE BRIDES OF DRACULA's Baron Meinster. And the film's prologue completely rewrites Hammer's Dracula continuity, as Lawrence (not Abraham) Van Helsing destroys the Count with the sharp spoke of a broken carriage wheel-in London's Hyde Park in 1872! (DRACULA A.D. 1972 also plays host to a third Van Helsing-Lorrimer's



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The year 1973 brought Peter Cushing's final portrayal of Van Helsing-his original Van Helsing, in a film whose main narrative is set in 1903. The picture was the somewhat notorious THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES, a Hammer coproduction with the Shaw Brothers that mixed and matched the former company's horror expertise with the latter's success with martial arts films. (LEGEND was touted as "The First Kung Fu Horror Spectacular.") Christopher Lee wanted nothing more to do with the series, so Dracula was played in his brief appearances by John Forbes-Robertson, so garishly made up that he looked more like Baby Jane Hudson than the Transylvanian nobleman. Warner Bros. dropped plans to release the film in the States, selling it to a company that distributed it in 1978 as THE SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA-a title that made the film seem more

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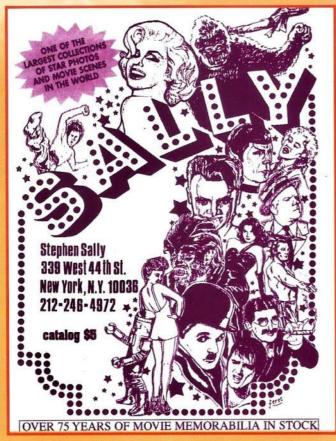
The strengths of the production are chiefly Oswald Morris's cinematography, largely rendered in russets and brownish tones (rather than the cool blues and greens one associates with lack Asher's stellar work for Hammer), and the production design of Trevor Williams. Curtis composer-of-choice Robert Cobert's score unfortunately uses a recurrent music-box theme lifted from DARK SHADOWS, which severely undercuts the horror of Dracula's seduction of Lucy Westenra (Fiona Lewis).

Jack Palance, who in his Attila portrayal in SIGN OF THE PAGAN (1954) seemed perfect casting for a Dracula in the manner of warrior Vlad Tepes, shows strength but little genuine menace as the Count. Given that Matheson's script focuses on Dracula's quest to reclaim his lost love (well before scriptwriter James V. Hart would take the notion to operatic extremes in Coppola's lush 1992 version), and that many of the supernatural elements are dropped, much of Dracula's force is diminished. Even with the visual charge of Van Helsing dis-

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VAN HELSING

Continued from page 44

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Nigel Davenport also appeared in such films as PEEP-ING TOM (1960), ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU (1979), and GREYSTOKE (1974). In BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, his Van Helsing is, like Cushing before him, a virile and younger-than-usual doctor. Not as well-versed in vampirology as Stoker's professor, he's still a worthy opponent to the vengeance-obsessed Count. This Van Helsing is a skeptic and unsure of his methods, but ready for action. ("I have lived long enough to accept what is,

whether science agrees with it or not.")

The strengths of the production are chiefly Oswald Morris's cinematography, largely rendered in russets and brownish tones (rather than the cool blues and greens one associates with Jack Asher's stellar work for Hammer), and the production design of Trevor Williams. Curtis composer-of-choice Robert Cobert's score unfortunately uses a recurrent music-box theme lifted from DARK SHADOWS, which severely undercuts the horror of Dracula's seduction of Lucy Westenra (Fiona Lewis).

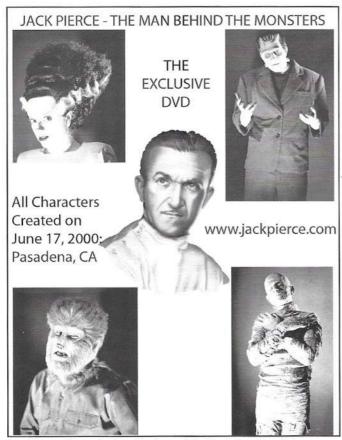
Jack Palance, who in his Attila portrayal in SIGN OF THE PAGAN (1954) seemed perfect casting for a Dracula in the manner of warrior Vlad Tepes, shows strength but little genuine menace as the Count. Given that Matheson's script focuses on Dracula's quest to reclaim his lost love (well before scriptwriter James V. Hart would take the notion to operatic extremes in Coppola's lush 1992 version), and that many of the supernatural elements are dropped, much of Dracula's force is dimin-

elements are dropped, much of Dracula's force is diminished. Even with the visual charge of Van Helsing dispatching the Lord of the Undead with a six-foot lance, the whole a f f a i r c o mes to a rather q u i e t close, with a military tattoo echoing the glories of Dracula's military past.

NOSFERATU, THE

NOSFERATU, THE VAMPYRE (1979) is a poetic meditation on death. Werner Herzog, in remaking W. F. Murnau's classic 1922 si-

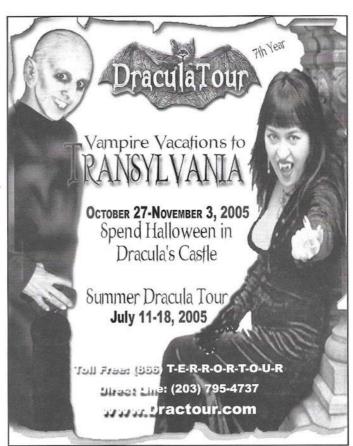
sic 1922 silent film,



let the audience's familiarity with the tale give him room for a visually inspired reexamination of the vampire themes and images. The film was awarded Berlin International Film Festival's Silver Bear for Outstanding Single Achievement in production design for Henning von Gierke and a nomination for the Golden Bear for director Herzog. For the role of Dracula, frequent Herzog collaborator Klaus Kinski received a German Film Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement in Acting. Initial critical reaction to the film was mixed, but many reviews agreed on the excellent production design and photography. The film was a coproduction of Herzog's own Filmproduktion, Gaumont, and ZDF.

În this telling, Dr. Van Helsing (not Professor Bulwer as in Murnau) is no staunch defender or vampire authority. In his first analysis of the distracted Lucy Harker (Isabelle Adjani), Van Helsing claims her condition is "nothing serious." He's portrayed as a muddleheaded medico, blindly insisting that scientific investigation won't support the notion of the supernatural. (No "There are such things!" from this Van Helsing.) Walter Ladengast, who had played Professor Daumer for Herzog in the enigmatic THE MYSTERY OF KASPER HAUSER (1974), is directed to play Van Helsing in a wheezy monotone, his face never registering emotion, like a doll's mask of despair. After he has staked out the comatose Nosferatu, this Van Helsing, who has removed the bloody stake and holds it in his hands, is arrested. In the vampyre's wake is left a community decimated by plague, its burgomeister dead, the town council dissolved, the prison abandoned. With no guards to watch him, Van Helsing whispers to the men before him, "Where, then, will you take me?" We never find out.

In the film's finale, Jonathan Harker (Bruno Ganz) is set free by a thoughtless maid who removes the restraining bits of holy wafer from the circle imprisoning him. Remembering nothing of his former life, Harker is now Nosferatu. He mounts a horse and gallops away unfettered, a dark rider loosed to run free into a darkening



horizon. We are left with the notion that "only Death is certain." (What, no taxes?)

In his review of NOSFERATU in *The New York Times* (October 1, 1979), Vincent Canby wrote, "Mr. Herzog has done what he set out to do, but when you come right down to it, one wonders if it's worth the trouble. Dracula, after all, is not Hamlet or Othello or Macbeth. He's not some profoundly complex character who speaks to us in more voices than most of us care to hear. Dracula is Santa Claus turned mean. He's a fairy-tale character. Though he represents something vestigially scary, he's not endlessly interesting." Since Dracula has never gone out of print in over 100 years, it is perhaps safe to say that the Vampire King has entered that pantheon of endlessly interesting characters such as Sherlock Holmes and, yes, Kris Kringle, who have taken on lives of their own.

"The young do not unburden themselves to the young, but to me who is old—I have seen many sorrows—the young ladies talk."

-COUNT DRACULA (1977)

Just in time for Christmas 1977, the BBC (and later, PBS in America) unveiled perhaps the most faithful adaptation of Stoker's novel in Gerald Savory's televersion COUNT DRACULA, starring Louis Jourdan as the Vampire King. Shot both in 35mm and video (a technique popular in England at the time), the miniseries took advantage of more time to finally present Stoker's tale in an authentically proper form: Harker's adventures in Transylvania, the vampirization of Lucy, the attacks on Mina, and the final race to Castle Dracula are all delineated with care. Leading the stalwart band is a Stoker-inspired Abraham Van Helsing, masterfully performed by Frank Finlay.

The production, without a sufficient budget for large sets and costumes, is kept small, but never looks cheap. The rooms in which many of the scenes unfold are tight interiors much like the well-known cottages of

Britain. The aural effects work (by Derek Miller-Timmins) utilizes bell tones and echo chambers. (The musical scoring fell to Kenyon Emrys-Roberts.) The vampire appearances (visual effects by Tony Harding) are done with a solarization technique. For example, instead of Dracula bursting in upon the seduction of Jonathan Harker a la Hammer, here the Count is shown in stark black-and-white and the humming ambient score goes suddenly dead. It's very different, but effective. Location work, particularly in the abbey and stairs of Whitby Harbor, is sparse, but well used.

The contrast between the two most faithful adaptations of Stoker, this for the BBC and the later Francis Ford Coppola epic (1992's BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA), is marked. Here the images are ghostly and dark; Coppola fills his screen with color and texture. Here all is damp and wet with British dew; the Coppola film is hot and ornately gilded. Here the color palette are blues and blacks; the Coppola is all reds, golds, and absinthiin green. The pitch of performance is in marked contrast as well. Gerald Savory's script is in the Stoker/Conan Doyle/LeFanu mode, deliberately and steadily advancing forward. Coppola and screenwriter James V. Hart favor a frenzied, impassioned tale seemingly out of Richard Burton's Arabian Nights (1885), a phantasmagoria.

Frank Finlay was RADA-trained and a member of fellow Van Helsing interpreter Laurence Olivier's company at the National Theatre, where he first created his Oscar-nominated role of Iago in Shakespeare's OTHELLO (filmed in 1965). The role also brought him nominations from the Golden Globes and BAFTRA. Known by Scarlet Streeters for his genre performances in THE DEADLY BEES (1966) and TWISTED NERVE (1968), and as Porthos in THE THREE MUSKETEERS (1973), THE FOUR MUSKE-TEERS (1974), and THE RETURN OF THE MUSKETEERS (1989), Finlay is greatly admired for his fine Inspector Lestrade in both A STUDY IN TERROR (1965) and MUR-DER BY DECREE (1979), two theatrical features pitting Sherlock Holmes against Jack the Ripper. In 1994, Finlay returned to Sherlockian territory to play Professor Sergius in the "Golden Pince-Nez" episode of THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. The actor was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1984.

Finlay makes a perfect Van Helsing. He sports a shock of bushy white hair and evidences a friendly unfamiliarity with the subtleties of English. The actor's relaxed but nonetheless passionate performance takes all the facets of Stoker's character and presents them as a kindly amalgam of physician, priest, father, and teacher. He gives Abraham a simple loving dignity, replacing the bold theatrics of other interpretations to arrive at a perfect distillation of Stoker's intention and a vital dramatic creation. Finlay's Van Helsing is the cool hand to the fevered brow, quiet, considerate, brewing up cocoa while manifesting strength and wisdom in a scene with so many transferences of spoon and cup that even Peter "Props" Cushing would have greatly appreciated the actor's dexterity.

Matching Finlay is Jack Shepherd, perhaps one of the best Renfields since Bernard Jukes first portrayed the character in Deane's play version. Judi Bowker and Bosco Hogan, as Mina and Jonathan Harker, also shine.

"Without me, Transylvania will be as exciting as Bucharest on a Monday night."

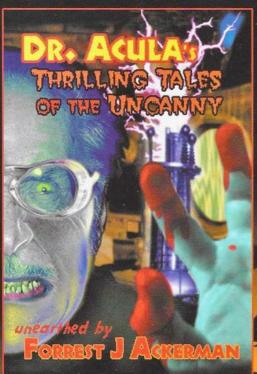
—LOVE AT FIRST BITE (1979)

With such a popular character as Dracula, spoofs are inevitable. While Van Helsing never meet Abbott and Costello, he has turned up in a couple of comedies. LOVE AT FIRST BITE (1979), script by Robert Kaufman and directed

Continued on page 76



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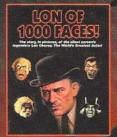


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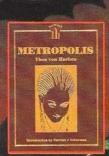
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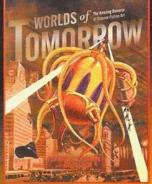
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Crimson Chronicles by Forrest J Ackerman

Bash and Beyond

At the Annual Monster Bash on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, PA, I was a guest of honor and had a wonderful time with Ron and Linda Chaney, Kevin J. Burns, Tom Savini, fabulous genre artist Larraine Bush, and Richard, Tom, and the gang from Scarlet Street, to whom I presented a 4E Award, a trophy in the form of my right hand, wearing both Lugosi's Dracula ring and Karloff's Mummy ring (as cufflink). The award was designed and fabricated by Joe Moe and John Dea'll. My Bat Pack voted the Scarlet Street magazine staff the award for their outstanding contribution to my personal well being and the good of genre fandom in general. (That's Richard holding the award I just presented in the foto below, while a beaming Tom applauds.) I've been invited back next year for Bash 2005. Among other celebrities, I expect to see the child actress star of ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEO-PLE, Susan Gordon-and you! Thanks to Ron Adams' family and staff for consistently hosting the Best Little Horror House in Butler!

THE FORGOTTEN is a never to be forgotten film. It's the best Science Fiction Film I've seen in years. The minute it goes on sale I'm going to add the DVD to my collection.

The 62nd World Science Fiction convention was held in Boston over Labor

Day weekend. There are just six fans left who attended the 1st World Science Fiction convention in 1939, and of the six, Jack Speer, David Kyle, Fredrik Pohl, and I were at the recent convention. Only missing, due to frail health, were Jack Williamson and Ray Bradbury. Of the 62 WorldCons, I have attended all but three and Robert Silverberg has a record of being present at every Hugo Award since the first in 1953.

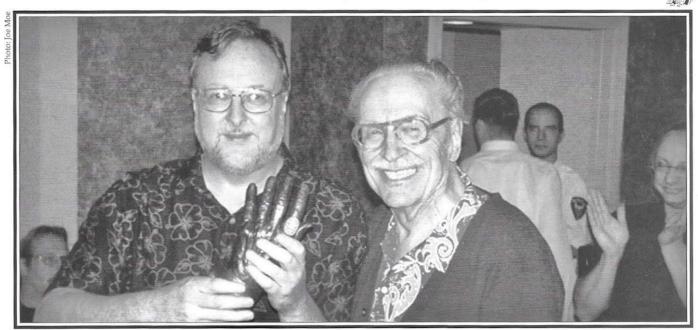
You may recall I had a cameo in the notorious Kiwi-gore-film DEAD ALIVE. Its director, Peter Jackson, has invited me to New Zealand to do another cameo for him in his currently in production remake of KING KONG. After Kong, what next? Slan, the World of Null, The Voyage of the Space Beagle, and any of A. E. Van Vogt's novels would be contenders. I also recommend consideration of Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke, The Forever War by Joe Haldeman, and my all time favorite Science Fiction novel, The World Below, by S. Fowler Wright. And the often publicized, but never made, H. G. Wells novel The Sleeper Wakes.

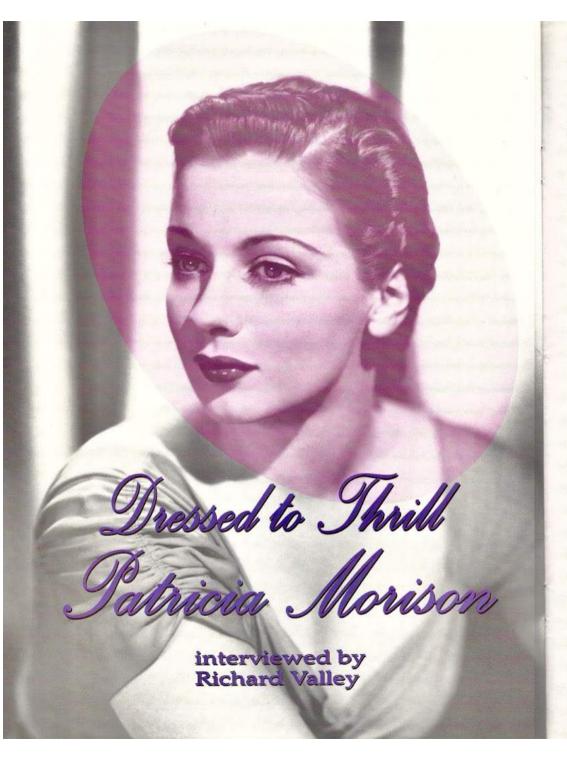
In the magnificent 20 million dollar Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame which opened in Seattle and is attracting 1,000 visitors a day, I have a very strong presence with collectors items from my personal collection, such as autographed 1st editions of novels, the Martian War Machine from

George Pal's WAR OF THE WORLDS and a model by Ray Harryhausen of the Washington Capital Dome being smashed into by a flying saucer from EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS.

Attended the Broadway touring company of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. Was surprised to see the now familiar trio of doo-wop urchins sing the title song and then retire to the sides of the stage to read oversized issues of . . . Famous Monsters of Filmland! Went backstage to visit with the talented cast and hungry man-eating Audrey 2! Don't miss this production if it comes to your town. Tell em' Uncle 4E sent you.

By the time you read this, I'll be 88. A president will have been elected. I'll have enjoyed the company of 150 of my closest friends at my Hollywood birthday party, including your Scarlet editor and managing editor; Anne Robinson of WAR OF THE WORLDS fame; directors John Landis, Curtis Harrington, and Joe Dante; Scream Queen Brinke Stevens; The Tall Man, Angus Scrimm; makeup artist (and deadly toastmaster) Verne Langdon; James Karen of RETURN OF THE LIV-ING DEAD; and Kevin McCarthy of IN-VASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. Someone will already be eBaying their party favors from my bash. Yes, I have seen the future. Now, if I could only travel back to the past. Brother, can you spare a time (machine)?!





She was the actress with the longest of British parents in New York, New York, on March 19, 1915, and made her Broadway debut as a teen in GROW-ING PAINS (1933). She went to Hollywood in the late thirties, where she kidnapped a man and was tracked down by the FBI in PERSONS IN HID-ING (1939), bludgeoned a romantic rival to death with a poker and disfigured her bloody corpse in CALLING DR. DEATH (1943), matched wits with Sherlock Holmes in DRESSED TO KILL (1946) and with Nick and Nora Charles in SONG OF THE THIN MAN (1947), and defied the Lord of the Jungle in TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS (1947). Then it was back to Broadway and the starring role in one of the greatest musical comedies of all time-Cole Porter's KISS ME, KATE (1948).

She was-and is-Patricia Morison, whose remarkable career continues to this day with appearances in two splendid documentaries tracing the glamorous history of the Great White Way: BROADWAY THE AMERICAN MUSICAL, a six-hour miniseries directed by Michael Kantor, and BROADWAY THE GOLDEN AGE, written and directed by Scarlet Street alumnus Rick McKay.

The movie business may have underestimated her considerable talents, but Pat Morison's films hold a special place in the hearts of countless fan. In this exclusive Scarlet Street interview, she takes us on a remarkable journey from Broadway to Hollywood and back again

Patricia Morison: It came as something of a surprise to my family that I wanted to be an actress. I wasn't born into a show business family. My fa-ther was with the Cunard Line. My grandfather was one of the first captains in the Cunard Line.

Scarlet Street: Cunard bought the White Star Line, owners of probably the most famous ship in history

PM: In 1912, my father was supposed to have been on the Titanic, but he was transferred to another ship at the last minute-otherwise I wouldn't be here! (Laughs) My mother was born in Ireland. They married in New York and I was born in New York. I was originally going to be a painter, an artist. I won a scholarship in New York that would have taken me to Paris to study, but I said to my mother, "I don't want to go! I want to be an actress!" And she said, "Oh, then we've got to find the best drama school for you!" She took it calmly.

SS: Living in New York, had you seen many plays on Broadway?

PM: I had seen the Lunts in plays they'd done together, and I'd seen Lynn Fontanne in STRANGE INTER-LUDE. But I just wanted to act, so my mother found a drama school for me. We went to the Neighborhood Playhouse. I studied with Martha Graham and several people from the Moscow

Art Theater. I did my first play on Broadway at 16 or so. It was called GROWING PAINS, aptly. (Laughs) Then I did another play-this was during the Depression-I did another play, a revue, in Greenwich Village. I could draw, and I had to work, so I also did sketches for designers in New York. I still kept trying to get cast in plays and I remember writing down in 1938 that, if I had to, I could sing. SS: But only if you had to, right?

PM: And so I went on an audition; it was a British operetta called THE TWO BOUOUETS. I got the role and Alfred Drake was my leading man!



SS: Your future costar in KISS ME KATE! PM: While I was in THE TWO BOU-OUETS, I tested for Paramount and MGM. Paramount took me and I came out to Hollywood.

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SS: Before that, while you were still on Broadway, you understudied Helen Hayes in VICTÓRÍA REGINA.

PM: Yes, I was the understudy. That's when I was still in drama school.

SS: And did you ever get to go on for Helen Haues?

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SS: That was during Price's matinee idol period.

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SS: Well, you mentioned that you painted and his interest in art was legendary. PM: Yes! Yes, he was a great authority. There was a time when the Sears Company wanted to handle serious art and he traveled the country with his fabulous collection. He left a large collection of his art to East Los Angeles College here. He wanted the Latino kids to learn about art. They're all small painting because he said he wanted the kids to take them off the wall and study them. He influenced a lot of the new Chicano art, you know;

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PM: That was based on the book of the same name by J. Edgar Hoover, about the different cases he handled. It was the first big kidnapping case that the FBI handled and it was the story of Kitty Kelly and Machine Gun Kelly. It had some similarities to Bonnie and Clyde, because toward the end of the story we kidnap a man and take him to my parent's farm in the Midwest. There was a big shootout there. So that was my very first film. I went





LEFT: In a role originally intended for Gale Sondergaard, Patricia Morison helped launch Universal's Inner Sanctum series with CALLING DR. DEATH (1943), costarring Lon Chaney Jr. as Dr. Mark Steele. As Nurse Stella Madden, Morison filed reports, paid bills, killed Steele's wife with a poker, disfigured the corpse with acid, and confessed under hypnosis. RIGHT: Dr. Steele and Nurse Madden are confronted by Mrs. Duval, whose husband has been falsely accused of murdering Steele's wife. Ever compassionate, Nurse Madden contemplates showing the wheelchair-bound invalid her celebrated Richard Widmark impression.

from doing Victorian Operettas to being on the FBI's most wanted list!

SS: You were typecast as a bad girl in Hollywood from the very start, weren't you? PM: After that one, yes!

SS: Hoover was always very conscious about publicity and a great one for grabbing all the credit. Did the FBI keep a close eye on the making of PERSONS IN HIDING?

PM: No, they didn't, but Tony Quinn and I and a couple of other actors were in Washington and we went to visit him. He showed us around the FBI. He liked the movie. (Laughs)

SS: Also in 1939, You made THE MAGNIFI-CENT FRAUD, which was directed by Robert Florey.

PM: I found him very good, very interesting as a director. He was a great photographer; he loved film, the art of it. He would spend hours lighting every scene. I mean, God, he made me look gorgeous! Some years ago they made a movie with Richard Dreyfuss called

MOON OVER PARADOR, in which he played a phony dictator, Well, that's based on THE MAGNIFICENT FRAUD. In the original version, Akim Tamiroff played an actor who's touring South America. The dictator has been murdered, so they make this actor pretend to be the dictator. The country tries to get money from this wealthy American played by Ralph Forbes, and I played his fiancée. We're flying down to supposedly help this country.

LEFT: Femme fatale Hilda Courtney (Patricia Morison) pulls the fur over the eyes of Dr. Watson (Nigel Bruce) in DRESSED TO KILL (1946). Watson offers to comfort her by doing his celebrated duck impression. RIGHT: Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone) thinks he's outsmarted Mrs. Courtney by finding a vital clue, but it's really a trap to lead the Great Detective to his doom.





SS: Did Robert Florey work closely with

PM: Oh, yes! It was not a big, big film, but he treated it as such. Visually, it's a beautiful film.

SS: You costarred with Akim Tamiroff several times.

PM: We made UNTAMED with Ray Milland and Jane Darwell. The director was George Archainbaud. We filmed quite a bit of it in an icehouse in downtown Los Angeles.

SS: You filmed it in an icehouse?

PM: (Laughs) It was supposed to be the Canadian North Woods! We filmed the winter snow scenes in the middle of a heat wave in Los Angeles. We'd be down in this icehouse; they had the whole set of the village and they made artificial snow by grinding ice, and these wind machines blew it around. It was below zero inside! We'd have to go into an intermediate room in order to get ourselves accustomed to the hot weather when we got out. (Laughs) SS: Did you enjoy making films with Akim Tamiroff?

PM: Akim was a real Moscow Art Theater actor. When he was going to do a role he would study it so hard! In THE MAGNIFICENT FRAUD, he played an actor, touring in a one-man show as Napoleon and all these other people. We were filming a lot of it in San Diego, because in some parts they have all this Spanish architecture, and when he put on the makeup to impersonate the dictator, he'd come and walk in front of us and hope we wouldn't recognize him. (Laughs) And we'd pretend we didn't! He was that kind of an actor; the makeup had to be just right. On another film, he played a Mexican and he had to crack a whip. He use to go all over the Paramount lot cracking this whip, practicing it long before they made the film. He was a lovely man!

SS: You also made a number of films with Ray Milland. In later years, he seemed something of a curmudgeon. What was he

like as a young man?

PM: Oh, he was charming! For some reason or another-and I may be wrong-I think he got a little bitter with the industry. I didn't see it, because by then I had left for Broadway, but when we worked together-when he was the leading man in ARE HUS-BANDS NECESSARY?, which was a light comedy—he was wonderful. He had a lovely wife and home, and he was always very nice. It was only later that he grew bitter.

SS: Were you satisfied with the roles that Paramount gave you in the thirties? PM: Well, no, I became very disillusioned—and that's when I started studying voice seriously. "Why do you want to do that?" they asked. You're an actress, not a singer." They weren't interested, really, in what I could do. Then, because I could sing, I was with the very first contingent from Hollywood that went overseas to entertain the troops as we entered World War

II. I was with Merle Oberon, Al Jolson, Frank McHugh, and Allen Jenkins, long before Bob Hope or Martha Raye went. SS: They're the ones who got all the

press, though.

PM: We didn't want any press; we didn't think that was wise. At one point we flew over to England in a seaplane. I remember that we got there right after the raid on Dieppe in 1942. All the reporters-all the well-known reporters at the time were in the bar with the boys, because they had been through this horrible experience. I spoke with Ouentin Reynolds, who was one of the great war reporters and writers, and he asked if I wanted to see London. I said, "Well, I want to see the church that I was christened in." He said, "Oh, I'll take you," and the next day we went around and there was just a big hole in the ground where the church had been. We were in England for some months. In fact, Merle's husband, Alexander Korda, was knighted while we were there.

SS: Was it difficult to hold the stage,

sharing it with Al Jolson?

PM: Well, I would rather not talk about Mr. Jolson. Of all the people in show business with whom I've worked, he's the only one I don't remember with any fondness-and honey, a lot of people have said that. He couldn't stand anyone but him in the spotlight. When we'd give out shows, Merle recited "The White Cliffs of Dover" and it would just be lovely, but he couldn't stand it; it wasn't him. Well, we wereair station in some part of En-

n't there for him! We'd be called at three o'clock in the morning to drive in a convoy during a blackout to some was a redhead, then. gland-I didn't even know The next day I got a where it was-and we'd be on call and she said, a makeshift stage. Frank McHugh and Al Jenkins would do their vaudeville act and Merle would recite "The White Cliffs of Dover" and I'd sing "Embraceable You" and songs like that. And while I was singing, Mr. Iolson would vocalize backstage as loud he could,

trying to drown me out. He did worse things than that. As a performer, he was electrifying. You couldn't take that away from him, but we were not there to see who was best; we were there for the boys. Here were these guys sitting on the tarmac, with their flight gear on and ready to fly over Germany and possibly never come back. We watched them take off after we finished performing. I mean, you don't compete for attention with that! Let's talk no more of Mr. Jolson.

SS: How's this? Is it true that you were publicized by Paramount as a rival to Dorothy Lamour because you had the

longest hair in Hollywood?

PM: (Laughs) Oh, that was when I arrived in Hollywood. They took me straight to the publicity department and they were all deciding what to call me. "The fire and ice girl." "Lamour plus Lamarr equals Lamorison"-it was ridiculous! And they finally went with the girl with the longest hair! SS: You actually worked with Lamour in BEYOND THE BLUE HORIZON. Did you

compare hair lengths?

PM: No, we never even talked about that. Dottie and I became very good friends. That was the first time I met Zsa Zsa Gabor, too, because Eva was in BEYOND THE BLUE HORIZON. There was an Hungarian actor called Charles Korvin; he had a car and he used to pick us up every day and take us to the studio. One day Eva said to me, "Patricia, my sister Zsa Zsa is arriving. She's married to the Turkish minister of something or other." And Zsa Zsa arrived on the set with all these Turks! (Laughs) She

"Patricia, this is

Zsa Zsa, Eva's

sister. I want you to know that our

leading air ace of Turkey is mad for you." I said, "Thank you, Zsa Zsa, but I'm not interested." Every once in a while I'd meet her and she'd say," "Pat, I've got just the man for you." And I'd say, "No, Zsa Zsa, I'm not in-And I'd say, "No, Zsa Zsa, I'm not interested." She used to say to my best friend, Isabelle, "You know what's wrong with Patricia? She has no initiative!" (Laughs)

SS: Initiative for Zsa Zsa was men!

PM: And always a rich one! I liked her very much; she was much more intelligent than people give her credit for, really. She was very bright; they were all very bright, the Gabors. I know a lot of people didn't like her. When we both toured in summer theater, I used to follow her sometimes into a theater and all the company would say, "Oh, thank God you're here!"

SS: In 1943, you made HITLER'S MAD-MAN, which was Douglas Sirk's first

American film.

PM: It was financed by German emigres, particularly a man named Erwin Brettauer, who had financed many German films. Apparently they didn't have enough money to finish it, though, so Metro took it over and completed the film. We'd been working at one of the small independent studios, and then MGM took it over. Douglas Sirk was a lovely man and a fine director, HITLER'S MADMEN was about the town of Lidice. It was destroyed. It was one of the few films where I was the leading lady, not the villainess. We were revolutionaries fighting against Hitler. We killed Reinhard Heydrich, one of Hitler's men, and because of that the Nazis destroyed the village and killed all the men and they took the women and terrorized them. One of the young women who was going to be sterilized was played by Ava Gardner, who had just been put under contract.

SS: Your next picture after HITLER'S MADMAN was a film noir called THE

FALLEN SPARROW.

PM: Oh, yes, with John Garfield. It's a flawed film, but it's interesting. It's not terribly well directed; if it wasn't for Garfield, it probably wouldn't be remembered. He played a revolutionary in Spain who had been tortured by this man he never saw; he just knew that he dragged his foot behind him. I played the rich girlfriend, and Walter Slezak played a famous professor with one foot dragging behind him. Maureen O'Hara was the leading lady.

SS: And for a change of pace, she turned out to be the bad girl.

PM: Yes, well, she was part of the conspiracy. (Laughs)

SS: Aside from the four years at Para-mount, did you free-lance for the rest of your time in Hollywood? You weren't under contract to Universal, for instance, when you made CALLING DR. DEATH?

PM: No, I wasn't. That was the first of the Inner Sanctum films, with Lon Chaney. I found him to be very nice and a little sad. He always had a melancholy demeanor; I couldn't help feel-

ing that there was something about him that was sad. But he was awfully nice to me, and very sweet. When the film wrapped, he made a point of coming over to me and taking my hand and saying how happy he was to have worked with me. It was something a little special; it showed a sensitive nature, I think.

SS: How fast was CALLING DOCTOR DEATH made?

PM: Oh, it was made in about three weeks, if that. I never counted how long it took for something to be made. I just enjoyed making them. I enjoyed going to the studio; I enjoyed all of that. I just was never happy with the parts. There were a lot of roles I nearly got and didn't. Perhaps if I'd gotten them, it would have made a differ-



KISS ME, KATE (1948)

ence, but then I might not have left Hollywood for Broadway.

SS: At the same time that you were making B films at Universal, you were appearing in such A films as SONG OF BERNA-DETTE and WITHOUT LOVE.

PM: Yes, WITHOUT LOVE was at MGM. And I also made SONG OF THE THIN MAN there.

SS: William Powell and Myrna Loy were America's perfect married couple for decades. What were they like personally? PM: Wonderful! Wonderful, and real professionals. People thought they were actually married. William Powell was a love. You'll find that actors who have had theater experience are somehow much easier to work with, and they had both worked on the stage. I just hate to say they're more professional, because film actors are professional, too in their own way, but it was a different kind of professionalism. Marlene Dietrich, a film star, knew everything about camera angles and lighting and how she was supposed to be shot. I don't think theater actors really care about that as much. They just want to play the role.

SS: SONG OF THE THIN MAN was the last film in the Thin Man series. Before that, you also appeared in the last film in the Sherlock Holmes series—DRESSED TO KILL.

PM: Yes, that's right! That was tremendous fun! Hollywood had what was called the British colony, and Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce were both a big part of it. My parents being British, my mother used to have them over for tea. Nigel Bruce-Willie Bruce, he was called-Willie and his wife were just lovely. Basil's wife Ouida was in charge of the British War Relief. They had this fabulous house in Bellaire that was like a British baronial hall, and Ouida was famous for her parties. We were all good friends. I loved making the film. Every afternoon at four

o'clock they wheeled in the tea tray with all the saucers and cups and

we'd stop for tea. (Laughs)

SS: Very British!

PM: After DRESSED TO KILL, Basil left film and went to New York . They lived in New York and he did a little bit on Broadway. They came to KISS ME KATE and had their daughter with them. They came back stage and they'd taught her to curtsy.

SS: You mentioned Ouida Rathbone's

famous parties.

PM: Yes, they were sumptuous. Very elaborate. She also gave parties for the British War Relief at the Beverly Hills Hotel. There was one wintertime when she thought it would be a great idea to put artificial ice and snow over the swimming pool and have a skating party. Well, the night before the party it rained and everything melted! When we arrived at the party, Ouida wasn't there. Basil said she'd collapsed and gone to the hospital. (Laughs) I still had a wonderful time. Rudy Vallee kept asking me to dance, and as we were dancing he said, "May I call on you?" Well, my mother being British, she'd always have afternoon tea, so I said, "Well, you can come for tea." So he came around for tea and he didn't know it was really going to be tea; he thought it was going to be something else. (Laughs) He had a suitcase full of pink champagne with him and my mother served him tea. He was very polite, though. He turned to me and said, "Will you think of me seriously?" I said, "I beg your pardon!" He said, "I'm flying to Florida and I'll be in touch with you, but please think of me seriously." I kept getting telegrams from him that he was in love with me and this and that and the other thing-and finally I had to write him a letter saying, "Mr. Val-

him down-that was me! (Laughs) SS: Oh, but how could you turn down a man who arrives with a suitcase full of champagne?

lee, I'm sorry, but I'm not interested."

When he wrote his autobiography and

mentioned the one girl that turned

PM: It wasn't difficult, really.



Rick BROADWAY: by Richard McKay's THE GOLDEN AGE Valley

It's been almost a decade since the publisher of what was then subtitled "The Magazine of Mystery and Horror" (the magazine being Scarlet Street, and the publisher being me) forged an online friendship with a popular New York cabaret performer named Rick McKay. And it was shortly after that that Rick McKay began conducting interviews for Scarlet Street. Over a number of years, Rick provided some of our most popular interviews—most memorably with David Manners, the classically handsome leading man of DRACULA (1931), THE MUMMY (1932), and THE BLACK CAT (1934), and Fay Wray, the beautiful horror heroine forever linked with a gentleman from Skull Island.

Rick never lost the interviewing bug. In fact, the bug bit him big time, because he's spent the past few years hunting down scores of subjects and questioning them for a fantastic new documentary—BROADWAY: THE GOLDEN AGE, newly out on DVD from Second Act Productions. Among those grilled mercilessly—well, politely approached, really—are those Broadway legends pictured above with Rick: Janis Paige, Robert Goulet, Kaye Ballard, Carol Lawrence, Gretchen Wyler, Charles Durning, Carol Channing, Patricia Morison, and Jerry Herman. Among those not pictured (but included in the documentary) are: Edie Adams, Betty Garrett, Beatrice Arthur, Stephen Sondheim, Nanette Fabray, Betsy Blair, Carol Burnett, Kitty Carlisle, Betty Comden, Adolph

Green, Hume Cronyn, Rosemary Harris, Barbara Cook, Farley Granger, Derek Jacobi, Uta Hagen, Kim Hunter, Shirley MacLaine, Maureen Stapleton, June Havoc, Tammy Grimes, Patricia Neal, Robert Morse, Jane Powell, Eva Marie Saint, Fay Wray, Jane Powell, Angela Lansbury, Elaine Stritch, Chita Rivera, Diana Rigg, Jerry Orbach, Ben Gazzara, Julie Harris, and Hal Prince. ("The more you know, the less you know, and I would know.")

"Did the Golden Age of Broadway really exist?" That was the question Rick, who first came to New York

in 1981, asked his subjects.

In many instances, the celebrities recalled their own start in the business. Said Carol Burnett: "Four of us bought a dress—a dress. Each one of us put in five dollars, so it was a \$20 dress at Bloomingdale's, which was expensive. Then, if you had an audition and you got first claim to it, you got to wear the dress, but then you were responsible for having it cleaned and put back in the closet for the next person.

"Did I find what I was looking for?" the interviewer asks himself. "Was it a Golden Age? Without question. Is it one, now? That's not for me to say. There's some kid in some small town, sitting in front of his computer, downloading songs over the internet from HAIRSPRAY or THE PRODUCERS, and that's his movie to make in 20 years."

We'll have more about BROADWAY: THE GOLDEN AGE in the next issue of Scarlet Street.





TOP: Tanya Rawlins (Patricia Morison) and her vi- get too big for their cious gang of hunters (including Barton MacLane) heads. (Laughs) In BE-play some monkey tricks on a certain ape man in TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS (1947). Tanya only has eyes for Tarzan (Johnny Weissmuller); no Boy (Johnny Sheffield) need apply.

PATRICIA MORISON

Continued from page 56

SS: When DRESSED TO KILL was being made, Rathbone had already decided that he'd had enough of playing Sherlock Holmes. He was tired of the role.

PM: I never noticed it on the set. In fact, we had more fun making that film.

SS: There was no friction between Rathbone and Nigel Bruce because Rathbone was quitting the series?

PM: Oh, no, never; they were very dear friends.

SS: You're a villainess again in DRESSED TO KILL, and you have a wonderful scene disguised as a Cockney charwoman.

PM: That was a lot of fun, yes. I had no problem with the Cockney. Some people didn't expect it at all!

SS: Roy William Neill directed DRESSED TO KILL and most of Rathbone's other Sherlock Holmes films.

PM: Honestly, I don't remember him that well-possibly because Basil had a lot to say about everything on the set. I think Basil was really the guiding force of the Sherlock Holmes pictures.

SS: Besides, Sherlock Holmes, Inner Sanctum, and The Thin Man, you appeared in another famous film series-Tarzan.

PM: Oh, yes! It was one of the last ones with Johnny Weissmuller-TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS. I was the huntress.

SS: Weissmuller only made one more Tarzan film after that, and HUNTRESS was the last one with Johnny Sheffield as Boy.

PM: Boy? I didn't pay much attention to him. (Laughs) Oh, it was a lot of fun. We shot it out at Billy Baldwin's estate, which had a big room that was like a jungle. Johnny Weissmuller was very nice. I remember the chimp playing Cheta especially, though. They used males, because males are smarter, but they always had to shoot them very carefully so you didn't see their private parts. Well, this one chimp went berserk! We all had to run for our cars, because he was get too big and too strong and he started attacking everybody. We ran and we rolled up the car windows and he kept banging on the windows.

SS: They can be very nasty, those chimpanzees.

PM: When they get to a certain age you can't use them, because their brains were trying to train him

to throw all these records around the room, but the minute they began to shoot him he'd disappear up into the rafters. They had these huge paintings from the prop department, these beautiful antique paintings on the wallsand one time he stood on top of a painting and peed all over it! (Laughs)

SS: In Technicolor, too!

PM: Yes! (Laughs) We had a lot of fun on that film. As I said, I was friends with Dottie Lamour, and I knew her famous costars, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, too. Whenever we finished shooting at Paramount, we'd all rush over to their set. They'd be on a break, and when they were on a break they'd be even funnier than they were performing.

SS: The road pictures are very funny

PM: They are funny. In TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS, I was a villain again. I was hunting animals. There was one scene where I was cracking a whip and being followed by a black panther. That was scary, because they had to take the leash off him so he could follow me. SS: In 1948, a decade after you starred on Broadway with Alfred Drake in THE TWO BOUQUETS, you went from appearing in films that you found unsatisfying to starring on Broadway with Alfred Drake in KISS ME, KATE. How did that happen?

PM: Oh, my God, that's so long ago! I did a lot of singing on the side while I was making films. My agent said, "You have got to get used to auditioning, and he sent me out to Cole Porter's house. I went out and I sang, and I purposely sang Rodgers and Hammerstein. Cole handed me the score of KISS ME, KATE. I didn't know that it had taken a year to raise the money to produce it. Nobody wanted to do it: they couldn't imagine a musical with Shakespeare in it. The people in New York wanted to sign an opera star for the lead, but Cole wanted me. They didn't; they said, "Oh, she's a movie actress. You couldn't hear her sing beyond the third row." But Cole was tenacious. In the meanwhile, I was going to film one of the very first television series. An independent company was going to do it, and it was a detective series called THE CASES OF EDDIE DRAKE, I was going to play the psychiatrist to whom Eddie Drake would come and tell his stories. I was supposed to shoot on a Monday, and I get a call from my agent telling me that Bob Hope was flying everybody to New York to Madison Square Garden for this rally. So I flew to New York and did the rally in Madison Square Garden, and then I went to the theater to convince the New York people that I was right for KISS ME, KATE. I sang for them and Alfred Drake was there. So then I had both Alfred Drake and Cole Porter in my corner. I came back to California and I got a call from Cole. He said, "We did it!" (Laughs) And then all I had to figure out was how to get out of this TV series-but as it turned out the problem was easily solved. It was a little production company; there was no network involved in those days. They said, "Well, we can film all your scenes all at once, 'cause they're just in the psychiatrist's office, and in a few days you'll get back to New York. We'll do that if you promise to plug our series when you're in the show." So that's what happened. SS: It must have been a thrill to create the role of Lilli Vanessi in such a classic show. PM: But you know, when we were rehearsing, we didn't know what we had! We did not know what we had until we opened in Philadelphia; opening night in Philadelphia was such a revelation, because we all said, "Well, we don't know how this is going to go. If we just get good personal reviews, we'll be lucky." Before that, when we heard the beautiful orchestrations by Robert Russell Bennett for the first time, it had just knocked us out! And then came opening night in Philadelphia! Cole came with his wife Linda and his mother, and the audience just went berserk! The next day, there was lines around the block. We were absolutely stunned! And then came opening night in New York. Well, you know, Cole walked with two crutches, and on opening night in New York he threw his crutches in the air; he was so thrilled.

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JOURNAL

a magazine of (sometimes irreverent) opinion celebrating the world's imaginative films issue #5 (available now) includes

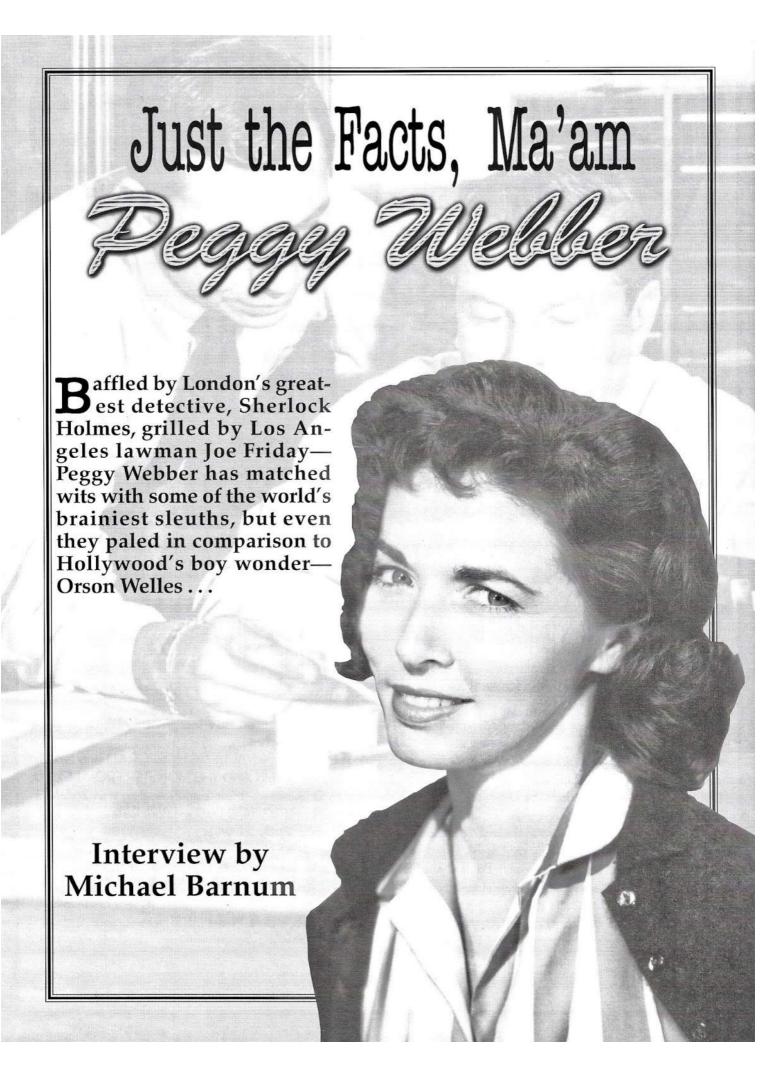
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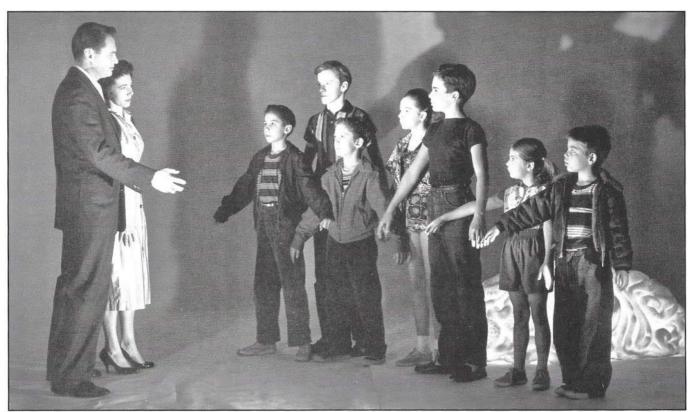
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Adam Williams and Peggy Webber chastise Johnny Crawford, Johnny Washbrook, Louis Towers, Sandy Descher, Michel Ray, Gloria Ann Halper, and Alan Roberts—otherwise known as THE SPACE CHILDREN (1958)—for using a month's supply of eggs to make a giant cheese omelette.

o the casual viewer of such fare as THE SCREAMING SKULL and THE SPACE CHILDREN (both 1958), leading lady Peggy Webber might have appeared to be just another pretty Hollywood actress who popped up out of nowhere and just as quickly vanished into obscurity. That observation would be very wrong. Although she appeared in only a handful of feature films, Ms. Webber has actually had quite a varied career in show business, which started during her childhood in Laredo, Texas, where she was born, and continues to this day. It's an impressive amount of work spanning over 55 years in radio, theater, films, and television.

As a voice artist, Ms. Webber worked on many of the popular radio shows of the 1940s, including the SHERLOCK HOLMES series starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, and dubbed many of Hollywood's leading actresses in a variety of feature films. When television entered the picture, she was one of the pioneers and, later, became an important part of actor/producer Jack Webb's company of stock players with multiple appearances on DRAGNET, ADAM-12, and EMERGENCY. On these programs she might be seen one week portraying an alcoholic housewife plotting revenge on her husband, the next week a harried single mom dealing with a juvenile delinquent son, and the week after that a nervous secretary trying to avert the kidnapping of her boss!

Currently working as a writer, director, and producer, Ms. Webber is still active in the entertainment industry,

creating award-winning programs heard on National Public Radio and, when she can find the time, continuing her work as a voiceover artist in some of Hollywood's top motion picture productions.

Currently living in sunny Los Angeles, Peggy Webber took time out of her schedule to chat with *Scarlet Street*

Scarlet Street: Yours wasn't a show business family, was it?

Peggy Webber: My father was an oil and gold-mining engineer and my mother probably had a great deal of talent, but she never had the opportunity to follow her dreams. When I was about two or two-and-a-half, I was put into a dancing school by my mother. During one of the school sessions, somebody came through to cast a play called THE RUS-SIAN PROLOGUE, which was going to play at the local theater between movies. They picked me because, I guess, I was rather precocious, and for my ability as a dancer at age two-and-a-half, and also because I could sing. So I sang two numbers and danced two different numbers. It created quite a furor in the newspaper and everything, so my mother proceeded to place me in more dancing schools. When we moved to Seattle, I modeled clothes at the Bon Marché department store when I was about six. I also appeared in some theaters doing various recitals. I was billed as the youngest toe dancer in the world. which was ridiculous! (Laughs) I also did adagio and acrobatic dancing, and then later I did special dances like Russian and Spanish dancing. Then we moved back to Texas and I worked in San Antonio in various clubs and places where my father was affiliated. He was president of the mining association, so in time I appeared before the Governor, the Vice President of the United States—all these different occasions that tied into what he was doing. That kept me in the public eye. I kept doing things where I was either being paid or I was appearing as a guest.

SS: What led to your radio career?

PW: While in Texas I developed a big interest in radio, mainly inspired by listening to Orson Welles on a series that he had. It was on Saturday afternoons during the first year of his Mercury Theater. I think he couldn't have been more than 18 or 19 years old himself, but I was inspired by that. I was about 11 when I first heard him. I got a group of youngsters together in San Antonio and we went to the local radio station and auditioned. I wrote the scripts and did the sound effects. They allowed us to do some of our shows on the air and I got the 7-Up bottling company to say they would sponsor us.

SS: That's enterprising for a girl of 11! PW: Unfortunately, at that point my father was transferred to Arizona. We lived in San Simon for six months. While we were there, I wrote scripts for a radio series that I hoped someday I would be able to do, then I went to the outhouse and prayed a lot! (Laughs) I used to listen on my father's car radio to Orson Welles—it was the one program I was allowed to listen to, although my



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LEFT: Peggy Webber had a small but vital role as the woman who mistakes Manny Balestrero (Henry Fonda) for a thief. Unfortunately, she's fingered THE WRONG MAN (1956). CENTER: Playing a typical nuclear family in THE SPACE CHILDREN are Peggy Webber, Johnny Crawford, Adam Williams, and Michel Ray RIGHT: Even SPACE CHILDREN have parents. This bunch includes (between Williams and Webber) former child star Jackie Coogan, who would soon allow his career to Fester.

shows that I'd liked doing on the radio. It was "The Big Mother," about a woman who steals a baby. We shot it before Christmas-right after Barton Yarborough, who played Jack's partner, died, it seems to me. He played Sgt. Ben Romero.

SS: That must have been an extremely difficult time for the show.

PW: Well, Barton had died and they had picked Barney Phillips to replace him. Barney played the sidekick, sort of as a fill in, and then he was replaced. "The Big Mother" ran in reruns for about five years, but when the show went into syndication they didn't show that episode anymore because it didn't have Ben Alexander, who became the new sidekick, in it. So the one I like appears to be lost! I remember we stayed up all night long filming it. Julie London, who was married to Jack, brought us baskets of food for dinner and breakfast and lunch. I recall I had to do my own makeup, and it was the only time I ever felt it was done the way it ought to be done. It was a great experience! We had a wonderful cameraman, whose last name was Coleman. Jack was in my corner and wanted me to be filmed right. If you don't have the cameraman and director working for your good, well, then,

you might as well forget it. SS: You were with DRAGNET from the very beginning in radio, and through each version on television.

PW: I was, yes. Jack told me I was his lucky rabbit. He called me "Ma" because of my being Ma Friday. I played

an old lady, but I was in my early twenties when I began playing her. Oh, Jack used to get such a big kick out of that! (Laughs) He used to live with his mother until he got married, I think, and I was still living with my mother when we started the radio show. We had these examples of everyday life to draw on and he just loved it. He'd stand there with the tears rolling down his facewe'd be on the air and I'd look up and he'd be dying with laughter.

SS: When the show was revived in the six-

ties, you guested again.

PW: Yes, I did several episodes. I finally came back from Japan in 1955 and went to work again. I had to start my career over about three different times during my life! I began working on lots of television shows. I was also raising little babies and staying up all night to learn lines and trying to wash diapers and do bottles and all of that, and hoping I could get a babysitter in the morning and hoping I could get to the studios by 6:30 in the morning. (Laughs) Then I started my theater in Rustic Canyon in 1957. All the big stars worked in my theater and it was even written up in TV Guide. It was very successful! We ran for about 10 years. At the end of that time, I switched over to the LA Shakespeare Repertory; that was the group that we became. The city was going to build me a theater to do Shakespeare, but my husband decided that he didn't want to be married to someone who was so busy doing theater. He asked for a divorce and told me he was going to take the children if I didn't give it all up. So that sort of sank me for awhile. Then I opened a restaurant and called it New Hope Inn. I kept a little dinner theater atmosphere going. We sold art in a gallery and we had a bar and we did theater in a little alcove. That allowed me to keep my finger in, but I was also able to be home with my children. I did that for about three years, and we got great notices. Then I moved on up to the central coast to get away from the lawsuits that my husband kept bringing me into. I couldn't take it anymore, so I took the children and moved. It was a better environment for them; it was a more wholesome atmosphere. I ran dinner theater up there on the weekends. I didn't perform, myself. That went on until about 1978. My children were pretty much on their own by then, going to college and so on. Then I was invited to go to Ireland to star in a play. My youngest child was about 18 and he was at the university and so I went on ahead and developed my career again.

SS: You also married again, to actor Sean

McClory.

PW: Yes, we married in 1983, but I had known him since about 1946 when he first came to this country. We had worked in a lot of shows together.

SS: In addition to your early TV work, you made JOURNEY INTO LIGHT in 1951. You played the alcoholic wife of a minister.

PW: I've never seen that picture. I think it's probably just as well! It has Sterling Hayden and Viveca Lindfors and

LEFT: This rare publicity still of Peggy Webber and John Hudson lends credence to the theory that the original title of THE SCREAMING SKULL (1958) was THE FLAPPING MERCEDES. Then again, we could be making up the whole thing. CENTER: Jenni Whitlock (Webber) is confronted not by THE SCREAMING SKULL, but by a ghost. RIGHT: Jenni Whitlock is confront not by a ghost, but by THE SCREAMING SKULL.





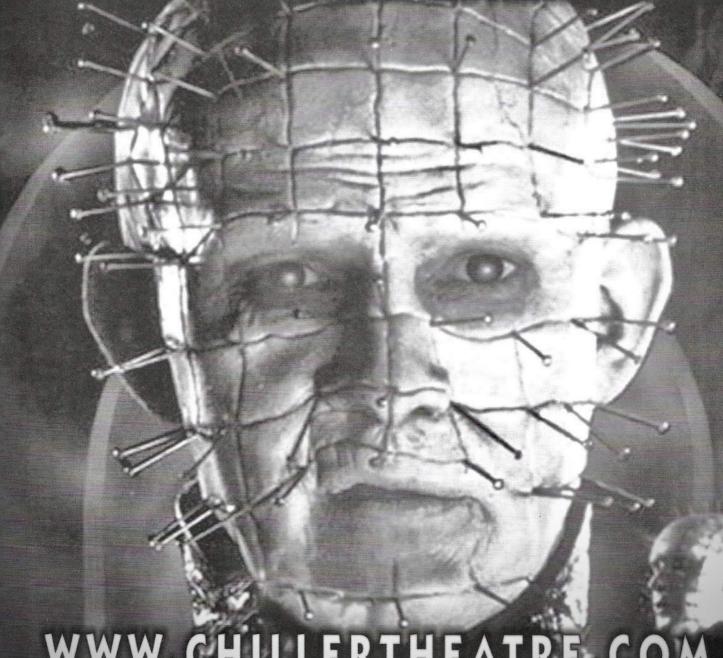


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Thomas Mitchell; it has quite a wonderful cast. I didn't feel comfortable in that picture, though. I'd never been drunk in my life and so it was something that I needed to experience, I think. Today I would play the role very differently, because I've been drunk a few times since then! (Laughs)

SS: Then you were in SUBMARINE COM-

MAND, with William Holden.

PW: I enjoyed that one and felt comfortable with John Farrow as the director; he did a very commendable job. He was an objectionable man to be around, but he was a good director.

SS: How do you feel about THE SCREAM-ING SKULL?

PW: It has all the right ingredients, but I don't know-it needed some smoothing out. Alex Nicol put it together. I had worked with him previously. He said it was going to be a remake of REBECCA. (Laughs) He had written it so that it was disguised. He'd be doing what was basically the Judith Anderson role, but he'd be playing the dim-witted gardener rather than the wicked housekeeper. It all sounded very interesting. I was looking forward to it, because Alex was in our theater group and he worked the way that all of us were working, with that kind of method style of acting. We rehearsed for one week as if it were a stage play. Then, when we shot pher, but they didn't reshoot when cluding playing peek-a-boo! there were errors and mistakes! They just let it go on! (Laughs) I saw it recently for the first time since we did it. I was horrified to see that my hair, which was sprayed down with like lacquer, got under John Hudson's nose when he was making love to me. It made it look like he had a Hitler mustache! I thought, "Oh, my gosh, they let this go! Why didn't they reshoot that scene?" It was so ridiculous, little things like that. But I thought it was a great attempt. Alex tried very hard; he was very interested in becoming a film director and so he was setting this up as a sort of trial balloon for himself. It never got released properly, though.

SS: Despite everything, it does have a cer-

tain atmosphere.

PW: It does. It almost was there. It was filmed at the Huntington Hartford Estate. It had been the home of Huntington Hartford. I guess he and his wife had divorced and so it was standing idle at the time.

SS: What do you remember about your leading

man, John Hudson?

PW: Well, I felt he did a good job, actually. I thought he was a good actor, but we didn't really have very much on the personal side-I mean we didn't talk, as I recall. We didn't really get to know each other. We had a very short shooting schedule? It was bang, bang, gang, trying to get that thing done.

SS: Also in 1958, you made the sci-fi film THE

SPACE CHILDREN.

PW: Oh, yes! Well, that was for William Alland, the producer, who had worked with Orson. A lot of work came to me through Orson. William Alland put me in THE SPACE CHILDREN, which I was delighted to do for him, because we had worked together before on MAC-BETH. Again, I never felt comfortable, because we were on the beach and they would do my hair in the morning and get it all curled and waved and everything, and then we'd head out to the beach and the fog would roll in. My hair would just go straight! (Laughs) So they pulled it back in a very severe bun to keep it from flying around! It was not a part that really did anything for me or made me feel inspired, and the picture itself was rather ridiculous.



it, we had Floyd Crosby, the fellow The military and the parents of THE SPACE doing various cartoons. But since I've who was the cameraman on HIGH CHILDREN (that's Peggy Webber in the been producing and directing my own NOON and who had won an Academy alarming stripes) are forced to commit hor-series and writing them—I write many Award. He was a very fine photogra- rifying acts by the devious little nippers, in- of my own shows—I don't have time

> SS: It didn't offer much opportunity for the adult stars. You were quire convincing, however, playing a worried parent.

> PW: Well, I had little kids at that time. (Laughs) It was nice to do a film with William Alland as the producer, though, and that was the main reason I did it. He had played the reporter whose face you never saw in CITIZEN KANE, by the way.

> SS: How was it working with so many precocious child actors?

> PW: Oh, it was very easy. It was pleasant. Jackie Coogan was in that film, too, and I had admired him so when he was a child actor. Michel Ray and Johnny Crawford played my two sons. I had done a couple of television shows where Johnny Crawford played my son, and had gotten very good notices, both he and L

> SS: You've always been active. What are you

working on currently?

PW: Now I have the California Artists Radio Theater. Many of the people who were with me at The Rustic Canyon Theater were with me at the beginning of CART, which I began about 15 years ago. We do 90-minute shows, most of which are three-act plays or adaptations of great books and literature. National Public Radio has played a large percentage of our shows. We play them all locally on the public radio station here. This past summer we did all of our MYSTERIES IN THE AIR with comedians. I had Jo Anne Worley, William Windom, and Charlotte Rae. A lot of comedians came to do serious parts and it gave a whole different twist to the mysteries. In a way, it brought them up to date and made them very timely. SS: What other TV work have you done?

PW: I did an I SPY episode with Bill Cosby and Robert Culp. That was a part that I enjoyed; I was very proud of it. And I worked a lot with Lee Marvin and did a live television show opposite him. He and I also did THE M SQUAD. I also did a live series in 1948 or 1949, called TREASURES OF LITERATURE. I wrote it and directed it and often starred in it. A lot of radio people worked on that series-Jeanette Nolan, Marvin Miller, and Lou Krugman-and some movie

people, too, including Jane Darwell and Walter Huston. Walter actually never was on camera, but he came to be a part of what was going on. He said he was learning how to perform in tele-vision. We won one of the early Academy of TV Arts and Science Awards. It wasn't called and Emmy yet; I think the next year they gave Emmys, but that year it was a citation.

SS: You also did voice work on some Satur-

day morning cartoons.

PW: I did the SMURFS! (Laughs) I did Elderberry on THE SMURFS and some other characters. I was called as a free-lance voice for almost six years,

for much else. I did recently dub the mother of Nicholas Cage in 8MM. They had added some dialogue for her. It was really a comedy character. Cage is running around with a machine gun and she's calling him sonny and honey and darling and stuff.

SS: Most of your fans know you for THE SCREAMING SKULL and THE SPACE

CHILDREN ..

PW: Oh, my gosh! My gosh, that's terrible! (Laughs)

SS: . . . but you have really done a wide range of other work.

PW: Well, some of the things in radio I really felt were the highlights of my career. However, "The Big Mother" episode of DRAGNET is probably the best thing I ever did on TV. I'm really pleased with some of the shows we're doing now on CART. We've won 24 awards and I've won 21 or 22 as producer/director. We've worked with David Warner—he is one of my favorite actors. He appeared in TITANIC. We just did THE LIFE OF EDWIN BOOTH with him and, of course, we did MACBETH with him and I won a double Gold from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for adapting/directing/producing it. SS: MACBETH again, eh?

PW: When I got my award, I wanted to say in my speech, "It's been 50 years since I worked with Orson Welles in MACBETH, and I've had a few years

to think about it!"

DIAL H FOR HITCHCOCK

Continued from page 27

amiable nothings. Perhaps the notion of the MacGuffin (of which the film itself arguably has several) went to his head?

As for what may be the absolute highlight of the collection, STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1950) in both its release and preview (previously labeled "British") versions, again only a commentary track lets the DVD down. This time, several people contribute to the track, the most engaging of them being biogra-pher Andrew Wilson discussing Patricia Highsmith and her novel. (Otherwise, it becomes a boring mishmash.) Highsmith wrote about a world governed by coincidence and the irrational. In turn, she felt affinity with her villains, who dared to commit "Nietzschean" crimes to demonstrate "superiority"-which raises serial questions. Highsmith's outlook suggests she'd watched such Hitchcock films as SUSPI-CION and ROPE, but doesn't it also anticipate the moment in NORTH BY NORTHWEST when Thornhill (Grant), already facing charges that range from drunk-driving to murder, is shown exiting an airport door marked "Entrance Only?" (Shortly, he'll say, "I never felt more alive!") That is, doesn't NORTH BY NORTHWEST represent the ultimate in "subjective technique," making the audience's exhilaration what counts? Isn't Thornhill himself just another MacGuffin, onto whom we project our own desires and fantasies?

If so, STRANGERS ON A TRAIN logically follows STAGE FRIGHT, and both mark a transition in Hitchcock's way of storytelling. In a separate appreciation included on the STRANGERS DVD, an admiring M. Night Shyamalan notes that we come away from the film chortling, "I just saw a movie about murder, and enjoyed myself!" Thus, Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker), full of wild schemes for harnessing the life force or flying to the moon, may be a not-so-distant relative of the gray-suited Thornhill!

Recently, Hitchcock devotee Stephen Rebello told me apropos STRANGERS ON A TRAIN that its director had been interested in the life of tennis star "Big Bill" Tilden. Suddenly, Hitchcock's first preference for an actor to play the film's hero Guy Haines-namely, William Holden-made sense to me. For if, in a film about "doubles," Guy is the alter ego of flamboyant Bruno (and vice versa), then macho Holden might indeed have made an excellent foil for Robert Walker and his fiercely campy performance. Tilden, too, had been a macho type-but secretly gay and, sadly, a pederast. In the end, Hitchcock had to settle for Farley Granger playing Guy. The STRANGERS ON A TRAIN documentary, in which Granger appears, makes clear that obtaining Walker from MGM cut into the film's budget. Granger and costar Ruth Roman were relatively inexpensive Warners contract players. Though Granger was himself gay—something Hitchcock knew when casting him in both ROPE and STRANGERS ON A TRAIN—he wasn't the strong type that ideally Guy should have been.

(So what of the casting of Montgomery Clift in I CONFESS? I'm convinced that Hitchcock, who admitted to biographer John Russell Taylor a sublimated gay side in himself, felt that Clift could best convey the spirituality of the role while being true-to-life.)

Practically everything about these DVDs is first-class. My only regret is that UNDER CAPRICORN (1949), a personal favorite, didn't make it into the Collection. For Scarlet Streeters, there are special attractions. Actors Kasey Rogers/Laura Elliott (see Scarlet Street #38) and Jack Larson (Scarlet Streets #5 and #14) appear in a couple of the documentaries. Rogers discusses her role as Miriam in STRANGERS ON A TRAIN and even has a featurette to herself describing "The Victim's P.O.V." Jack gets to recall a youthful meeting with Monty Clift in the Warners commissary, one of them dressed in a sailor suit, the other as a priest.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK:
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STAGE FRIGHT
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NORTH BY NORTHWEST (reissue)
Warner Home Video—\$19.97 each
STRANGERS ON A TRAIN
Warner Home Video—\$26.99

HEY-Y-Y-Y, ABBOTT!

Continued from page 31

absurd. Nevertheless, Dear Boris acquits himself well, and delivers the funniest line in the picture—"You're going to commit suicide if it's the last thing you do!" The highlight here is the film's closing sequence, with the true killer stalking Freddie in a cavern with a bottomless pit. The sequence is very well executed and features one of the best and most elaborate sets ever used in an Abbott and Costello comedy.

Although the team made four service comedies, ABBOTT AND COSTELLO IN THE FOREIGN LEGION is the only one to put Bud and Lou (as wrestling promoters Bud Jones and Lou Hotchkiss) in actual combat—with predictably wacky results. ABBOTT AND COSTELLÓ MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN (1951) is a somewhat atypical feature, with more sight gags than usual and very little verbal interplay. Nevertheless, it ranks as the second funniest of the "Meet the Monsters" movies, trailing only the sublime MEET FRANKENSTEIN. Bud and Lou play detectives Bud Alexander and Lou Francis (their surnames are their actual middle names), seeking to



clear the Invisible One (Arthur Franz) of a murder rap. Lou's appearance in the boxing ring, with an unseen "helper," is a showstopper—and it's a nice touch to include a photo of Claude Rains as the inventor of the invisibility formula.

COMIN' AROUND THE MOUNTAIN (1951) is one the team's weaker overall efforts, but it includes some splendid moments. Theatrical agent Al Stewart (Abbott) and entertainer Wilbert McCoy (Costello) travel to Kentucky when they learn that Wilbert may be the heir to a hidden hillbilly fortune, and become entangled in a century-old blood feud. In one fall-down-laughing sequence, Wilbert visits a country witch (Margaret Hamilton) in order to procure a love potion. Park Avenue Hillbillie Dorothy Shay (as Wilbert's kissin' cousin Dorothy) belts a few tunes, and Glenn Strange (Frankenstein's Monster himself!) turns up as rival clan leader Devil Dan Winfield. LOST IN ALASKA runs along very (perhaps too) similar linestransplanting the team (as firemen Tom Watson and George Bell) to a far-flung locale and lampooning local customs. The climactic dog sled chase is fun.

Most critics rank ABBOTT AND COS-TELLO GO TO MARS (1953) among the team's worst films, but it actually has a lot going for it. The plot, in which janitors Lester and Orville (guess who?) accidentally blast themselves into outer space while sweeping out an experimental rocket, is silly and scatterbrained-but so what? This is one of the team's most imaginative efforts. It moves like lightning and features some hilarious set pieces. The sequences of the rocket in flight (traveling through New York/New Jersey's Lincoln Tunnel, making the Statue of Liberty duck) are more impressive than the special effects scenes found in most of the era's straight sci-fi pictures. The title is another misnomer, though, since the team actually travels to Venus!

As with the previous two sets, Volume 3's eight films are offered on two double-sided DVDs (two films per side). The transfers are up to the high standards set by the earlier entries. Bonus features are limited to some production notes and the theatrical trailers for some—but not all—of the films.





WRITER'S BLOCK Bruce Kimmel Author House, 2004 208 pages-\$24.95

Bruce Kimmel puts his talent for evoking the past, utilized so winningly in his nostalgic Benjamin Kritzer trilogy, to a sinister new purpose in Writer's Block, a witty, disturbing murder mys-

tery set in the late 1960s.

Broadway is the setting, and the plot revolves around a new musical called BUS AND TRUCK, a sort of KISS ME KATE combo of backstage antics and show-within-a-show. The year is 1969. We follow the first reading of the script (at which the librettist, songwriter, producer, director, and cast all realize that, while the first act is socko, the second is a lox) to rehearsals in the Bronx, then on to out-of-town tryouts in New Haven and Boston, back to Manhattan for previews, and finally to opening night-where producer Conrad Ballinger steps out on the stage during the curtain calls and dramatically proclaims that a key member of the BUS AND TRUCK production team is dead.

Sound familiar? Producer David Merrick did just that very thing on August 25, 1980, when he announced to the stunned cast and opening-night audience of 42ND STREET that the show's choreographer and director, Gower Champion, had died. Ah, but here's the catch-Champion died of a rare blood cancer; the novel's decedent dies in a fire, the tragic result of fall-

At the smash opening night of 42ND STREET (1980), publicity-mad producer David Merrick announces that director/choreographer Gower Champion had died earlier in the day. A fictionalized version of the notorious incident figures in Bruce Kimmel's novel Writer Block.



ing asleep with a lit cigarette. That's what the police say, anyway, but librettist Arthur Myerson begins to ponder, and what he ponders is whether the much-loathed, sexually masochistic victim-who threatened Ballinger with the disruption of the show, who seduced and harassed both chorus girl Allison and chorus boy Eddie, who fought bitterly with director Galen

Chapman-was murdered.

The events that take place in Writer's Block are a dizzying, exhilarating blend of fact and fiction. Galen Chapman is, of course, based on Champion (with a flash of Fosse). BUS AND TRUCK's veteran stars Mary Masters and Robert O'Brien recall Mary Martin and Robert Preston, who actually costarred on Broadway in I DO! I DO! (1966). Songwriter Stanley Sherman is sort of an Even Stephen-namely, Sondheim and Schwartz-but it's Arthur Myerson who, like Soudheim, loves to play games. Arthur also loves to write song parodies, including one for a musical version of PSYCHO (sung to the tune of "I'm Lovely" from A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM):

I'm Psycho What I am is Psycho I'm a little Psycho in my head Shower You don't want to shower Or within the hour You'll be dead.

The novel's murder isn't based on an actual crime, but so vividly does Kimmel bring the period to life, so deftly does he weave imaginary events with genuine theater history-Mary Martin's difficulties remembering her lines, Stephen Schwartz's conflict with Bob Fosse during the 1972 production of PIP-PIN, David Merrick's shocking revelation—that even the most learned show biz aficionado will wonder how the news of a brash young Broadwayite's fiery finish ever escaped his knowledge.

Writer's Block is extraordinarily clever throughout, but never more so than when Kimmel performs some theatrical sleight of hand in a manner that's positively Hitchcockian. The Master of Suspense, who in such classic screen thrillers as THE 39 STEPS (1935), STAGE FRIGHT (1950), and TORN CURTAIN (1966) explored the ever deceptive world of the theater, would have smiled. And so will you.

Richard Valley

LOVE AND THE POWER

J. Eidemak iUniverse, 2004 474 pages-\$25.95

It's no longer a surprise—hasn't been for years and years—that crime is big business. Nor is it news, particularly with the world in its current state and 'vital interests" calling all the political shots, that big business is a crime. Nevertheless, the new thriller from J. Eidemak, Love and the Power (2004), puts so sufficient a number of new spins on the old, old story that everything old seems new again.

Criminal John Forbes begins his career as a petty thief, moves "up" to drug dealing, and then achieves his dream by acquiring Higgins Investment in the City of London. He now controls a company that offers him what he's always craved-power with which to take over smaller companies and build an empire. With Higgins Investment, he also acquires disgraced industrialist Erick Elgberg, who aids him in his climb to the top, and artist Mona Hobson, who becomes his lover and aids him in his climb to the bottom.

So successful are Forbes and Elgberg that they attract some unwelcome attention from the law. And with a traitor in their midst, the possibility that Forbes' entire empire may collapse looms large-until Elgberg comes up with a way out, paving the way for the conclusion of this deft thriller.

-Drew Sullivan

LORD RUTHVEN THE VAMPIRE

John William Polidori, Charles Nodier, Eugene Scribe, and Frank J. Morlock

Black Coat Press, 2004 246 pages-\$20.95

THE RETURN OF LORD RUTHVEN

Alexandre Dumas Black Coat Press, 2004 246 pages—\$20.95

With Dracula all over Scarlet Street thisissue, it's as well to recall an earlier literary vampire-ruthless Lord Ruthven, created in 1816 by John Polidori on the very night that Mary Shelley conceived

of Frankenstein.

These two volumes present Polidori's original story The Vampire, a fresh take on the character by Lord Byron, Charles Nodier's 1820 stage version, Eugene Scribe's 1821 vaudeville spoof, an 1851 sequel to the novel by Alexandre Dumas, and two new stories by Frank J. Morlock, in one of which Ruthven meets Dracula and Sherlock Holmes.

-Drew Sullivan

Trying out a new musical can be MURDER

...a witty, disturbing murder mystery...a dizzying, exhilarating blend of fact and fiction, Writer's Block is extraordinarily clever throughout.

> Richard Valley Scarlet Street

Trying out a new musical

WRITER'S BLOCK

A mystery

Bruce Kimmel

Available at bookstores everywhere, and at amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com and other online bookdealers. Signed copies available at www.writersblocksite.com





THE GYPSY MOON* (1953) Richard Crane, Sally Mansfield, scotty Beckett. Another entertaining Rocky Jones adventure. Two vandering moons, connected by a strange, "atmosphere chain," wage var against each other. Rocky and his crew try to intervene. Lots of pace ships. Not bad. 16mm. DVD item #S028D, VHS item #S028 THE MAGNETIC MONSTER* (1953) Richard Carlson, King Scotty Beckett. wandering mooi war against each other.

space ships. Not bad. 1emm. DVD Item #\$028D, Vris item #\$028
THE MAGNETIC MONSTER. (1953) Richard Carlson, King
Donovan, Jean Byron, Harry Ellerbe, Leo Britt, Byron Foulger. A lone
wolf nuclear scientist invents a new magnetic element that draws energy
from everything around it. Unless stopped, it will eventually grow and
grow until it destroys the earth! One of the best early '50s sci-fi films
Highly recommended. 16mm. DVD Item #\$009D, VHS Item #\$009
MAN FROM 1997' (1956 aka BOOK FROM THE FUTURE)
Jacques Cernas, Gloria Talbot, James Garner, Charlie Ruggles. Cernas
finds a bookseller with a 1997 almanac. He buys the book and—able to
see into the future—bets on a horse race. Sure enough, his horse takes
first. However, his big win puts him under the eye of gangsters. Things
get bizarre when the book's owner comes back from the future to reclaim
his property! A fantastic premise that's carried off well. Originally made
for TV but looks and plays basically life a feature. Recommended.
Approx. 50 minutes. From 16mm. DVD Item #\$246D, VHS Item #\$246
DR. MABUSE VS. SCOTLAND YARD (1963) Peter Van
Eyck, Wolgang Preiss, Klaus Kinski. The spirit of 19r. Mabuse takes
over the body of a notable professor. He then begins a new citywide
crime wave that baffles even the best detectives from Scotland Yard.
Cool Mabuse outing. 16mm. DVD item #\$3770, VHS Item #\$077
RETURN OF THE GIANT MONSTERS* (1967) (Agiro
Hondo, Kichijiro Ueda, Naoyuki Abe. In this, the third film in the Gamera

RETURN OF THE GIANT MIONSTERS" (1967) Kajiro Hondo, Kichijiro Ueda, Naoyuki Abe. In this, the third film in the Gamera series, we find our giant flying turtle quasi-super hero monster pitted against the dreaded Gyaos, a big, mean looking monster who has laser beam breath. What wort those Japanese filmmakers think of next? Good schlocky fun. Color, 16mm, DVD item #S247D, VHS item #S247

Good schlocky fun. Color, 16mm, DVD Item #5247D, VHS Item #5247
REFUGE OF FEAR* (1974) Craig Hill, Patty Shepard, Teresa
Gimpera, Fernando Hilback. A grim look at nuclear war and its effects
on the world. See what happens to two couples who were once been
friends. This film is well done and holds your attention, but it's definitely
on the grim side. Looking for comedy? You've got the wrong movie.
Color, 16mm, DVD Item #5248D, VHS Item #5248
ALIEN CONTAMINATION* (1979) Ian McCulloch, Louise Marlo,
Marino Mass. What a houl. This Affer inpuff starts with an ereir shin

Marino Mase. What a hoot! This Alien rip-off starts with an eerie ship pulling into NY harbor. On board is a cargo of green pulsating eggs. The eggs explode and cause a green acid to get into your skin, causing you to die a most horrible death. It seems the eggs were concocted by a one-eyed Martian who's hiding out in South America. This movie is a real trip. Highly recommended. DVD item #\$249D, VHS item #\$249

THE SPIDER* (1931) Edmund Lowe, Lois Moran, El Brendel, John Arledge. In a precursor to Chandu the Magician, Lowe plays Chatrand the Great. During his evening performance a murder occurs. A hand wearing a sinister spider ring raises a revolver, a shot rings out, and someone falls to the floor. Watch for the séance scene where weird ghost-like creatures float above the stage. 16mm. DVD item #H327D, VHS item #H327.

BEFORE DAWN* (1933) Warner Oland, Dorothy Wilson, Stuart EFORE DAWN* (1933) Warner Oland, Dorothy Wilson, Stuart Erwin. A great old dark house chiller. A woman dies after seeing the ghost of a dead gangster who, years earlier, had hidden a million dollars in her creepy old estate. A cast of strange characters arrives: Erwis is an investigator looking into the weird goings-on, Wilson is a beautiful psychic, and Oland is a mysterious doctor. Atmospheric and creepy, Mucho recommended. 16mm. DVD item #H328D, VHS item #H328.

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A SHOT IN THE DARK* (1933, Real Art) Jack Hawkins, Dorothy A SHOH IN THE DARK (1933, Real Any Jack Hawkins, Doronly Boyd, O.B., Clarence, Russell Thorndilke. An obscure British old dark house thriller in which several people confess to the murder of a despised old recluse. Who is the real killer? It's a mystery. Please don't confuse this with the 1935 American production starring Charles Starrett. From 16mm, H006. DVD item #H006D, VHS item #H006

A NIGHT OF TERROR* (1933) Wallace Ford, Bela Lugosi, Sally Blane, Tully Marshall. There's a monstrous-looking fellow prowing the grounds of a creepy manor. A murder occurs! Bela, as a weird Hindu servant, falls under the spotlight. Is it really Bela, or is it someone else? One of the most laughable endings in the history of horror films. A must for that alone, 16mm. DVD item #H332D, VHS item #H332

A WALKING NIGHTMARE* (1942, Monogram) James Dunn,

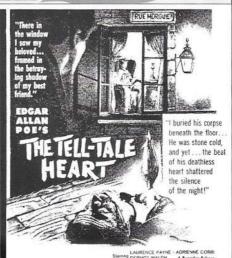
Joan Woodbury, Paul McVey, Minerva Urecal. Dunn is a smooth-talking investigator who is looking for a wealthy kidnap victim. The victim turns up alive but brain damaged. Is it really brain damage or has he been changed into a zombie? Dunn and his gal pal soon end up in a spooky old house. Good fun. 16mm. DVD item#H329D, VHS item#H329 THE THREE WEIRD SISTERS* (1948) Nancy Price, Mary Clear Asterna Lidden Westell.

Clare, Anthony Hulme, Mary Merrall. An old dark house thriller complete with a diabolical murder plot and three crippled sisters. You don't want to miss this very atmospheric British production, which features a really cool ending. Great stuff. 16mm. DVD item #H025D, VHS item #H025

THE TELLTALE HEART* (1960) Lawrence Payne, Dermot Walsh. A very unusual and very entertaining adaptation of the classic Poe story. A shy loner discovers the girl he loves in the arms of his best friend. Murder and horror follow in dramatic fashion. Possibly the best filmed version of this story. 16mm. DVD item #H126D, VHS item #H126

HOUSE OF MYSTERY* (1961) Peter Dyneley, Jane Hylton, Colin Gordon. A ghostly gem. A couple reter byneley, Jane Hyllon, Colin Gordon. A ghostly gem. A couple cenes to a home with a horrible past and supernatural trappings. Lights go on and off and the ghost a man is seen. A medium is then called in. A great twist ending. This is a classy ghost story, but be advised that our DVD master was taken an old 3/" tape that had numerous video dropouts. It is still quite watchable %" tape that had numerous video dropouts. It is still quite watch though, and we recommend it. DVD item #H330D, VHS item #H330





HOUSE OF DREAMS* (circa 1963) Pauline Elliott, Robert Barry, Charlene Bradley. This is just an awful movie. Barry keeps having eerie dreams about a creepy abandoned house. He sees visions of his own body down a well shaft near the house, then sees his wife hanging from a noose. When his wife really hangs herself, he drives to the house to meet his fate. Can you make it through all 69 minutes of House of Dreams? It's a challenge, 35mm. DVD item #H331D, VHS item #H331

Dreams? It's a challenge. 35mm. DVD Item #H331D, VHS Item #H331
THE WITCH'S MOUNTAIN* (1972) Patty Shepard, John
Caffari, Monica Randall, Luis Barboo. A young couple travels through
the lonely Pyenees Mountains. They decide to spend the night at an
arcient Spanish castle. Big mistake, because the castle is the gathering
place for a local witches' coven. Lots of ancient black magic rituals.
STRANGE VENGEANCE OF ROSALIE* (1973) Bonnie
Beetels Kee Housed, Asthony Zerba Moures in the reservious hard

Bedella, Ken Howard, Anthony Zerbe. Howard picks up a quirky but pretty vagabond lady in the desert. She tricks him into taking her to her

Bedella, Ken Howard, Anthony Zerbe. Howard picks up a quirky but pretty vagabond lady in the desert. She tricks him into taking her to her desert shack where she breaks his leg with the blunt end of an axel After that it's very much like the Cathy Bates-James Caan relationship from Stephen King's Misery. Fine acting by all. The scene where she is pumping up a tire in her bikini underwear is a gem. Highly recommended. Color, 16mm. DVO item #H334D, VHS item #H334 RETURN OF THE EVIL DEAD* (1973) Tony Kendall, Fernando Sancho, Esperanza Roy, Frank Brana. Some consider this sequel to Tombs of the Blind Dead to be better than its predecessor. The Templar Knights, executed 500 years earlier for committing human sacrifices, return from the grave to menace a village. A group of people takes refuge in a deserted church, where they try to fend off the monsters. Rated R. Color, 16mm. DVD item #H335D, VHS item #H335 MARY, MARY, BLOODY MARY* (1976) Cristina Farrare, David Young, John Carradine, Helena Rojo. Ferrare seems perfectly normal early in the film. Then she starts killing people and drinking their blood. She is stalked by a weird character who turns out to be her Dad, played by Carradine. He, too, is a bloodsucking vampire. Rated R for nudity and violence. Color, 16mm. DVD Item #H335D, VHS item #H336 NIGHT OF THE SEA GULLS* (1976) Victor Petit, Maria Kosti, Sandra Mozarosky, Jose Calvo. Those Templar Knights are at it again.

NIGHT OF THE SEA GULLS* (1976) Victor Petit, Maria Kosti, Sandra Mozaroeky, Jose Cahvo. Those Tempiar Knights are at it again. In this, the fourth film in the "Blind Dead" series, a small fishing village is menaced by the blind monsters, who arise seven nights every seven years to claim human sacrifices from the villages. Rated R. Color, 16mm. DVD item #H337D, VH5 item #H337
NIGHT NURSE* (1977) Davina Whitehouse, Kay Taylor, Gary Day. A creepy Euro-horror film. An art professional is brutally murdered by a house mistress in an eerie mansion where a crippled old opera star resides. A new night nurse is hired. She is initially unaware of the sinister forces that surround her but soon discovers the house is haunted. Not bad. Color, 16mm. DVD teem #H338D, VH5 Item #H338
SCHOOL OF DEATH* (1977) Dean Selmier, Sandra Mozaroski, Victoria Vera. In 1899 a weird monster-oux does experiments on an

Victoria Vera. In 1899 a weird monster-guy does experiments on an attractive young woman. He's actually a fire-scarred mad doctor who subjects his beautiful victim to memory-draining surgery, turning her into a zombiel Wow. Color, 16mm. DVD item #H339D, VHS item #H339

SWORD & SANDAL

ANTIGONE* (1961, aka RITES FOR THE DEAD) Irene Papas Maro Kodou. A pretty lavish spectacle film whose costume budget must have been quite high. Basically a Greek traged, done on an epic scale with Papas giving a top performance in the title role. A rice booming music score adds to the proceedings. In Italian A nice booming music score adds to the proceedings. In Ita inglish subtitles. 16mm. DVD item #SS130D, VHS item #SS130 lian

obtities, 16mm, DVD item #SS1300, V10 OF THE NILE* (1962) Jeanne Crain, Vincent Price, of the Nile* (1962) Jeanne Crain, as Nefertiti, QUEEN OF Edmund Purdom. A fine epic—overlooked for years. Crain, as Nefertiti, is desired by Purdom, who is imprisoned by an evil high priest, played brilliantly by Price. She weds the Pharaoh and after his death becomes brilliantly by Price. She weds the Pharaoh and after his death becomes queen of Egypt. The high priest then attempts a military coup! Tense action follows. Color, 16mm. DVD item #SS131D, VHS item #SS131



79 A.D.* (1962) Brad Harris, Susan Paget, Mara Lane, Jany Clair.

79 A.D.* (1962) Brad Harris, Susan Paget, Mara Lane, Jany Clair. A treacherous Roman noble commits crimes, then blaines Christians. Harris and his pals pose as gladiators and try to infiltrate the enemy. However, they are caught and sentenced to death! Listen for the roar Mt. Vesuvue. Color. filmm. DVD item #SS132D, VHS Item #SS132. THE VAMPIRES* (1963) Gordon Scott, Gianna Marie Canale, Jacques Cernas. The mighty Gollath is pitted against Kobrak, an evil vampire who threatens the life of his sweetheart. Kobrak has the added advantage of having an army of faceless robots at his beck and call. One of Scott's best sword and sandal epics. Recommended. Released by AIP. Color, from 16mm, DVD item #SS65D, VHS Item #SS65 SANDOKAN, PIRATE OF MALAYSIA* (1964, aka PIRATES OF THE SEVEN SEAS) Steve Reeves, Jacquelline Sassard, Mimmo Palmara. A ruthless general tries to force a good king to resign his throne in favor of British rule. Sandokan and his comrades intervene. Watch for the scene where rebels are viciously attacked by a band of wild-eyed natives. Color, 16mm, DVD Item #SS130, VHS Item #SS133

spaghetti—Euro Westerns.

THE LAST GUN* (1964) Cameron Mitchell, Carl Mohner, Celina Cely, Kitty Carver. Mitchell is a tough gunfighter who hangs up his platols for good. He settles down in a small, peaceful fown, but when a vicious outlaw torments the townsclik, he knows he must strap on his platols once more. Critically considered to be the best film by director Sergio Bergonzelli. Color, from. DVD Item #2W350, VHS Item #3W35 THE JACKALS* (1967) Vincent Price, Dana Iverson, Robert Gunnar, A Euro-style western shot in South Africa and centered around his 1838 gold from an old prospector and his granddaughter. Great script, fine acting, lots of action, and beautiful cimenatography. Price is great as the crusty prospector. Good Illim from start to finish. Color, form. DVD Item #3W360, VHS Item #3W36
A TASTE OF DEATM* (1968) John Ireland, Andrea Giordana, Raymond Pellegrin, Betsy Bell. A bunch of nasty cattle thieves take over a small Colorado town. A retired sheriff decides to strap on his pisteds and take matters into his own hands. The climactic battle takes place in the snow-covered Rockies, which is equite a change from most Euro-western locales. Color, 16mm. DVD Item #3W37D, VHS Item #3W37
IT CAN BE DONE AMIGO* (1971) Bud Spencer, Jack Palance, Renato Cestie, Dany Saval. A western Casanova seduces the sister of a tough gunfighter. The gunfighter gets wind of it and comes after him. Look out! There's a nice touch of wit attached to the proceedings. Color, fform. DVD Item #3W11.

TRINITY'S PAL IS BACK ...SLAM BANG ACTION!



MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-CRIME-FILM NOIR

NOTE: Mystery-suspense titles are just \$72.95 (unless otnerwisk noted), plus \$2.05 per tille for packaging, handling, and postage. THE PENAL CODE* (1932, Monarch) Regis Toomey, Helend Cohan, Pat O'Malley, Robert Ellis. Regis is a small town boy gone ad After serving a stretch in prison, he returns home only to be blackmalled by a bank cashier! When the bank is robbed, Regis is framed. Okar indic crime d'arma. 16mn, DVD Item #M3510, VHS Item #M351

Indie crime drama. 16mm. DVD Item #M351D, VHS Item #M351
BADGE OF HONOR* (1934, Maytair) Buster Crabbe, Ruth Hall,
Ralph Lewis. Buster is an unemployed reported who gets a big break
(and a job) when he rescues the daughter of a big newspaper publisher.
Buster soon discovers a connection between his own managing editor, a
gangster, and the owner of a rival paper. A slick B newspaper crime
movie that's easy to like. 16mm. DVD Item #M352D, VHS Item #M352
HOLLYWOOD MYSTERY* (1934, aka HOLLYWOOD
HODDLUM) June Clyde, Frank Albertson, Jose Crespo. A wildly
mresponsible publicity agent keeps getting fired from his studio. After
he's given another chance, he hires an obscure actor and presents him
to the press as a real "killer." To complicate matters, a real gangster
soon shows up. 16mm. DVD Item #M353D, VHS Item #M353

MILIDDER AT THE VANITIES* (1934). Victor Mel anten. Jack

soon shows up. 16mm. DVD Item #M353D, VHS Item #M353
MURDER AT THE VANITIES' (1934) Victor McLaglen, Jack
Oakle, Kitty Carlisle, Carl Brisson. A terrible murder takes place
backstage during the opening of a musical revue, throwing the whole
show into chaos. McLagler steps in to solve the mystery. Is the killer
still inside the theater? Some top musical numbers. This is a GREAT
movie—an absolute must. 16mm. DVD Item #M354D, VHS Item #M354

movie—an absolute must. 16mm, DVD Item #M354D, VHS Item #M354
THE GIRL WHO CAME BACK* (1935, Chesterfield) Shirley
Grey, Sidney Blackmer, Noel Madison. A young gal falls in with a
counterfeiting ring. She flees to Hollywood to get away from her past,
but the gang eventually shows up and tries to coerce her into a scheme
against a bank. Most of these mid-30s Chesterfields are pretty good ant
his one is no exception. 16mm, DVD Item #M355D, VHS Item #M355
BARS OF HATE* (1936, Victory) Regis Toomey, Shella Terry,
Molly O'Day, Robert Warwick, Fuzzy Knight. Terry's brother is framed
by gangsters for a crime he didn't commit. Toomey comes to her aid
and tines to bring the real crooks to justice. Not-to-bad Sam Katzman
production. From 16mm, DVD Item #M356D, VHS Item #M356
THE GOLD RACKET* (1937, Grand National) Conrad Nagel,
Eleanor Hunt. Fuzzy Knight. Warner Richmond. A good B thriller

THE GOLD RACKET* (1937, Grand National) Conrad Nagel, Eleanor Hunt, Fuzzy Knight, Warner Richmond. A good B thriller about a criminal gold smuggling ring. When a federal agent is bumped off, Conrad is called in to investigate. The trail leads to Mexico and back, with the final shootout taking place in a cool underground lair. 16mm, DVD item #M357D, VHS item #M357 MURDER IS NEWS* (1937, Warwick) John Gallaudet, George McKay, Iris Meredith. A great whodunit. Radio columnist Jerry Tracy heads out to meet with a big industrialist who plans to break in on a clandestine meeting between his attorney and his wife. However, when he arrives, Tracy finds the body of the industrialist murdered! He is then knocked cold. When he awakens, the body of the murdered man has vanished! Recommended, 16mm. DVD item #M358D, VHS item #M358 GENTLEMAN FROM DIXIE* (1942, PRC) Jack LaRue, Marion Marsh, Robert Kellard, Clarence Muse. Jack*s an ex-con who was

Marsh, Robert Kellard, Clarence Muse. Jack's an ex-con who was framed for murder. Later, he finds that a local businessman is not only the real killer but is also trying to move in on his brother's wife. Marsh is fantastic in a part that called for her to play a real bitch. This PRC drams tries hard, but completely falls apart the last few minutes because of some really ridiculous scenes. There are a few moments that are amazingly bad. A few scratchy and choppy spots the first 20 minutes, but a nice print overall. 16mm. DVD item #M359D, VHS item #M359



CRIME INC.* (1945, PRC) Lionel Atwill, Leo Carillo, Tom Neal, Martha Tilton, Sheldon Leonard, Harry Shannon. A pretty good cast considering this is just a PRC quickie, not a bad movie either. A crime reporter exposes crooks and racketeers during prohibition. To make things more complicated, he falls in love with one of the gangsters sister. From 16mm. DVD item #M360D, VHS item #M360

sister. From 1emm. DVD item #MM360D, VHS item #MM360

JIGSAW* (1949) Franchot Tone, Jean Wallace, Myron McCormick,
Marc Lawrence. A crusading New York Assistant D.A. tries to expose
and smash a ville "hate group" made up of supposedly patriotic
Americans. Watch for some big name cameo stars. Tone is quite good,
as is the film itself. From 16mm, DVD item #M126D, VHS item #M126

WITNESS IN THE DARK* (1959) Nigel Green, Patricia Daint Conrad Phillips, Madge Ryan. A killer breaks into an apartment to steal a valuable brooch. He kills an old woman, but in fleeing he encounters a young woman on the stairs. In the film's most memorable scene, he rers she is blind! He sneaks past, but she reaches out and fe at. This is the only clue the police have. Later, the killer returns a her permanently, 16mm. DVD item #M361D, VHS item #M36

SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE DEADLY NECKLACE* (1962) Christopher Lee, Senta Berger, Thorley Walters. It's Holmes vs. Moriarty once again as the evil doctor goes after a valuable necklace. This is a well-polished German production that was put together by many of the folks from Hammer studies, including director Terrence Fisher. Recommended. 16mm. DVD item #SH19D, VHS item #SH19

MANHATTAN NIGHT OF MURDER* (1965) George Nader, MANTATIAN NIGHT OF WORDER (1965) George Nader, Heinz Weiss, Monika Grimm, Peter Kulper. A ring of gangsters has been terrorizing New York City. Special agent Jerry Cotton is summoned by the FBI to help crack down on the Criminals and put them out of business. Nader made a series of Jerry Cotton films, and this may be the first on video. From 16mm, DVD itom #M363D, VHS item #M363

DIABOLICALLY YOURS* (1968) Alain Delon, Senta Berger Sergio Fantoni. Delion is involved in a bad car accident, leaving him wi no memory except for that of his wife. Attempts are made on his life, strange voice urges him to commit suicide. What the hell is going organized with the hel

ACTION-ADVENTURE

NOTE: Action-Adventure titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted), plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage RENEGADES* (1931) Warner Baxter, Myrna Loy, Bela Lugosi, Noah Beery, C. Henry Gordon, A female spy betrays a French officer, but he soon escapes captivity and wins military honors by helping beat back rebels. This is grand adventure filled with action, intrigue, gunrunning, kidnappings, skirmishes, etc. Baxter and Loy are outstanding, but the show is practically stolen by Lugosi and Gordon as heaviers. Recommended, 16mm, DVD item #AA38D, VHS item #AA38. ON YOUR GILARD* (1933)

ON YOUR GUARD* (1933, Mercury) Richard Talmadge, Dorothy Burgess, Edmund Breese, Bob Kortman. Dick is an ex-con trying to help two ladies and a young boy who are being victimized by a bunch of crooks. There's a great scene where a timber flume explodes and showers logs and huge amounts of water down onto a house. Lots of typical Talmadge stunts. 16mm. DVD item #AA39D, VHS item #AA39

TOUGH TO HANDLE* (1937, Conn-Ambassador) Frankie Darro, TOUGH TO HANDLE* (1937, Conn-Ambassador) Franke Darro, kane Richmond, Phyllis Fraser, Harry Worth, Frankie's grandpa has a winning sweepstakes licket, but crooks claim the prize money with a phony ticket. They then drop by and bump off Grandpal Frankie and Kane (who's a crackerjack reporter) investigate the slaying. A nice Darro-Richmond effort. 16mm, DVD item #AA40D, VHS item #AA40

Darro-Richmond effort, 16mm, DVD item #AA40D, VHS item #AA40
STORM OVER BENGAL* (1938) Patric Knowles, Richard
Cromwell, Rochelle Hudson, Douglass Dumbrille. A great action film! A
tough British captain tries to warn a dying maharajah about a plot by the
evil Ramin Kahn to overthrow British troops in the region. Great action
and intrigue follow. Look for the eye-popping scene where a plane
crashes into a rocky canyon before rebel troops! Set in India: shot at
Lone Pine. A must. 16mm. DVD item #AA41D, VHS Item #AA41
A YANK IN LIBYA* (1942, PRC) H.B. Warner, Walter Wolf King,
Lean Woordburg, An American correspondent discovers a scheme by

Joan Woodbury. An American correspondent discovers a scheme by the Nazis to incite Libyan tribes to attack the British. Can he warn the British forces in time? Enjoyable PRC adventure thriller—no classic, but fun. From 16mm. DVD item #AA42D, VHS item #AA42



EXPLOITATION

SEX* (1920) Louise Glaum, Irving Cummings, William Conklin. A vamp preys on loose husbands. Her friend lectures her on morality, but she rejects the wisdom. Later, she dumps her latest conquest to marry a millionaire but soon finds her rich hubby is having an affair with...you guessed it...her friend! A cheap, but interesting exploitation quickie. Silent with music score. 16mm. DVD item #X109D, VHS Item #X109.

Silent with music score. Temm. DVD Item #X109D, VPIS Item #X109
MANHATTAN LOVE SONG* (1934) Robert Armstrong, Dixie
Lee, Nydja Westman. A rich family finds their late father has left them
roke. They end up in debt and pondering ways to raise cash. The ture
of buriesque is very tempting. This is a typical Monogram society drama,
but it takes an interesting diversion into the seedy side of the stripleaseburlesque business. From form. DVD Item #X110D, VHS item #X110.

burlesque business. From 16mm. DVD item #X110D, VHS item #X110.

A MOST UNUSUAL WOMAN* (1963, aka THE APE WOMAN)
Annie Girardot, Achille Majerone, Elvira Paalone. This is one hairy
woman. A lady who is covered with hair marries a guy who exploits her
deformity. What a cad. Wait 'til you see what happens when she has a
baby. It's not what you expect. An Interesting and very offbeat
exploitation film. From 16mm. DVD Item #X111D, VHS Item #X111
TEPMINAL ISL AND* (1674). Exp. Identines. Tom Selleck Barbare.

TERMINAL ISLAND* (1974) Ena Hartman, Tom Selleck, Barbara Leigh, Don Marshall, Phylis Davis. Terminal Island is an open prison island where the criminals have been declared legally dead. The population is mostly hardened killers, mostly men. However there are a few busty, lusty, tough, seductive babes. What follows is a study in violence, sex, depravity, and even a little feminism thrown in for good measure. An irresistible exploitation germ. Rated R for mudity, language, and violence. Color, From 35mm. DVD Item #X112D, VHS Item #X112

SPYS, ESPIONAGE, & INTRIGUE

LADY FROM CHUNKING* (1942, PRC) Anna Mae Wong, Harold Huber, Mae Clarke, Rick Vallin. A dose of WWII espionage, PRC style. Anna Mae, who hails from a noble Chinese family, is actually the leader of a Guerilla movement against Japanese insurgents. Her main adversary is a merciless Japanese general known as, "The Butcher.' As PRC films go this one is way above average. Good acting compliments a decent script. From 16mm. DVD item #SP550, VHS item #SP55

OPERATION GOLD INGOT* (1960) Alberto Llonelta, Felix Marten, Martine Carol, Francis Blanche. The owner of a high tech heating mechanism is being forced by gangsters to help them in a plot to steal gold ignots. An ex-secret agent is called in to search for him and stop the criminals. From 16mn. DVD item #SP560, VHS item #SP56

NIGHT TRAIN TO MILAN* (1963) Jack Palance, Yvonne

NIGHT TRAIN TO MILAN* (1963) Jack Palance, Yvonne Furneaux, Andrea Chechi. A gritly little intrigue thriller with Palance as an ex-nazi doctor in hiding. While riding on a train, he is recognized by passengers who remember him from their prisoner of war camp days. One thing leads to another and when Palance is cornered, he commits murder! He then takes a girl hostage. Strong performances by all in this rare but memorable film. 16mm. DVD tem #89F07. VHS Item #89F67

rare but memorable film. 16mm. DVD Item #SP57D, VHS Item #SP57
BANG, YOU'RE DEAD* (1955) Brett Halsey, Dana Andrews,
Pier Angeli. An American agent unknowingly has a tiny camera
implanted in his eye so the guys at Soviet HQ can see what he's doing.
Both sides are in a race to recover lost plans to a powerful laser death
ray, which was developed by a American scientist. Released here as
'Seyn in Your Eye.* Color, fomm. DVD Item #SP58D, VHS Item #SP58
TO CHASE A MILLION* (1967) Richard Bradford, Yoko Tani,
Dan Bandall, atton Roderse. A lone shark bounds bunter nits himself

Ron Randall, Anton Rodgers. A lone shark bounty hunter pits himself against secret agents from three countries. The prize: a million bucks in cash for vital state secrets. A little talky in spots, but overall not bad. Color, from16mm. DVD item #SP59D, VHS item #SP59



PATRICIA MORISON

Continued from page 58

SS: He'd had a string of shows be-fore KISS ME, KATE that were less than major hits.

PM: That's right. It took him a long time to get the show on the road; he used to give these wonderful parties for his rich, rich friends, and he'd have two performers do the score, I remember when we opened in London, Douglas Fairbanks came over to me and said, "Cole wanted me to put \$3,000 in this show and I turned him down." (Laughs) In the recent revival. they rewrote the second act, not to its advantage. They cut out a whole scene and they turned the man who wants to marry Lilli into General McArthur. It was incredible! We had a wonderful scene that was worthy of Noel Coward in the second act, and they replaced it with some very stupid dialogue.

SS: Once you opened on Broadway, did Hollywood finally realize they'd been wasting your talents?

PM: Not really! (Laughs) I was busy, anyway. I was two years in New York and a year and a half in London. While I was in London, Gertrude Lawrence, who was starring in THE KING AND I. died. Rodgers and Hammerstein wanted me to step in right away, but I said, "I can't leave; I have another eight or nine months to go." They had different Mrs. Annas till I was free. Celeste Holm played it for a month, somebody else played it for a month, and so on. When I finally left KATE, I went right into The KING AND I with Yul Brynner. We played it on Broadway for about six months, then we toured the country for a couple of years. SS: You went back to Hollywood in 1960 for SONG WITHOUT END.

PM: The original director of SONG WITHOUT END was Charles Vidor, but he died during the filming. George LEFT: Patricia Morison receives the full Hollywood glamour treatment in this publicity shot. CENTER: Nigel Bruce, Morison, and Basil Rathbone take a break from filming DRESSED TO KILL (1946). RIGHT: Morison replaced the late Gertrude Lawrence as Yul Brynner's costar in the original Broadway production of THE KING AND I (1951). PAGE 73 LEFT: The original photo caption reads "Patricia Morison, Paramount player currently featured in MALAYA, is shown here viewing the repainting work being done at the new home she's purchased in Santa Monica Canyon overlooking the Pacific Ocean and from which she can see Catalina Island on a clear dav." PAGE 73 RIGHT: Hilda Courtney (Morison) and her gang are caught red-handed by Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson (Rathbone and Bruce) in DRESSED TÓ KILL.

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SS: Films were still disillusioning? PM: Oh, yes! (Laughs) SS: Of the pictures you made, have

you a particular favorite?

PM: Oh, I liked the Sherlock Holmes film very much. And I enjoyed SONG OF THE THIN MAN. None of them really gave me a chance to do what I thought I could do. I'm not a fighter: I'm no Bette Davis or Joan Crawford or any of those wonderful women who fight for every role. I've never been that way. I've always thought that the people in charge, the producers and so on, knew better. I think that's a fault I have. I have no complaints, though;

I've been very fortunate. Singing is one of my great loves, and to be able to sing those songs in KISS ME, KATE was a privilege. One thing I would have loved was to go into opera. I did in a concert—I did CARMEN in concert with Arthur Fiedler-and I loved it. I have a friend who's a wonderful pianist, and every Sunday we work on French things and Italian songs for my own pleasure. SS: You wouldn't perform publicly?

PM: No, no; honey, I'm 89. (Laughs) SS: You've certainly had a life filled with wonderful success and experiences.

PM: Yes, some wonderful experiences. I remember a good will trip that a lot of us from Hollywood made to Mexico. There were three plane loads of us. Louella Parsons, Hedda Hopper, Norma Shearer, Wallace Beery, David Selznick, Frank Capra, Mickey Rooney-a whole bunch of us flew in these plane loads; they'd never seen so many stars in one big group. We landed in Mexico and they swamped the plane; we couldn't get off . We got to the Reformer Hotel and outside they kept calling for Wallace Beery. They kept crying, "Pancho Villa! Pancho Villa!" He'd starred in a picture as Pancho Villa. Well, thousands of people were out in the street calling for him. He'd had a couple of drinks and he'd go out



on the balcony

and wave at them. Then he'd stagger back inside and say, "Give me another drink!" (Laughs) In those days, you didn't fly directly to Mexico City; there was a stopover. I shared a suite with Kay Francis and Lady Sylvia Ashley, who'd been married to Gable. Selznick came over and said, "I've rented a

boat. Let's go out on the bay." So we went and Frank Capra came along. Well, he chased me all over the boat and tried to pull the hairpins out of my hair. Lady Ashley said, "Leave her alone!" When we got to the Reformer Hotel in Mexico, he knocked on my door and tried to get into my room and I had to slam the door in his face. Well, years later, it was the anniversary of Columbia Pictures and they were honoring Barbra Streisand and all these other people. And I was sitting at my table and this little old man came over to me and sat down and said, "Can you ever forgive me?" And it was Frank Capra! (Laughs)



SS: It took him long enough to apologize! PM: There's a postscript. David Selznick was producing a film called THE PARADINE CASE, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, and they wanted me to play the woman in it. So I went over to Selznick's studio and he said, "Pat, I want to tell you something. Frank was way out of line in Mexico and you were such a lady." I said, "Thank you, David." And he said, "By the way, I'm going to Encinada for the weekend; would you like to come?" (Laughs) SS: Boy, you had your share, didn't you?

PM: Oh, yeah, quite a few! SS: It's a shame that you didn't get the

role in THE PARADINE CASE.

PM: That was one role I would have loved to have had. I knew Hitchcock. I knew he and his wife; they were part of the British Colony. He was a darling. He had the sweetest wife and his daughter. He loved to eat and he had a tendency-he'd be sitting in a restaurant and he'd fall asleep right in the chair. Especially after a big dinnerhe'd just sit there and doze off.

SS: And everyone would go on talking. PM: Yes! (Laughs) He was a delight! You know, it's terrible-people who write about Hollywood miss so many things. It's wonderful to write all the things that might titillate you-but the people in Hollywood were lovely; they

were warm and wonderful. I was at a birthday party for Janis Paige the other night, talking to a famous agent, and I said, "I'm so grateful that I've been in this business. With all the faults that people have-with the bitches and the bastards and all the things they try to pull-underneath it all these are the warmest and most humane people anywhere. We have to portray life, and in order to do so you have to really feel it by osmosis. You can talk about all the stupid things people do-especially actors,

although maybe it's just publicized more-but underneath everything there's a sense of humanity. The stories about Joan Crawford-yes, she had all these qualities. Of all the people in the world, she knew she was her own product. She wasn't selling a coat or a car or a house; she had to sell herself! That was her life! But I spent evenings with her and afternoons-had lunch with herand it was a completely different picture. Certainly, ambition was part of it. You become ambitious and defend yourself, and some-

It's the ones who are feisty, like Joan Crawford . . . SS: Like Bette Davis, too. PM: Like Bette Davis! I'll never forget-I was in New York and she wasn't working, and she had to work. We were at a party for Photoplay and there were some important people there, and Bette Davis was eyeing them. My best friend was with me, and she said to Bette Davis, "I just love everything you did!"-and Bette Davis said, "I wish you'd tell them about that!" (Laughs)

times people do it in a wrong

way. But I admired her determi-

nation. I should have been more

feisty, but it's not my nature, I

can't. I expected the people who worked for me to do that.

last storu? PM: Well, I did an awful movie called QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS; I was another huntress in that. They shot it at the studio, and the lion that they had to attack the hero was the original MGM lion. He was so old that they had to give him false teeth. (Laughs) Every time they'd say shoot and he was supposed to attack the hero, he'd lie down instead. (laughs) The sets were not air conditioned back then, and it was so hot that we'd open the doors on the soundstage. Well, one day we weren't paying attention and out he

walked and he went

strolling down La Cienga Boulevard.



SS: Only in Hollywood!

PM: Only in Hollywood! (Laughs)

SS: That's feisty, all right! How about one



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Continued from page 58

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PM: Oh, I liked the Sherlock Holmes film very much. And I enjoyed SONG OF THE THIN MAN. None of them really gave me a chance to do what I thought I could do. I'm not a fighter; I'm no Bette Davis or Joan Crawford or any of those wonderful women who fight for every role. I've never been that way. I've always thought that the people in charge, the producers and so on, knew better. I think that's a fault I have. I

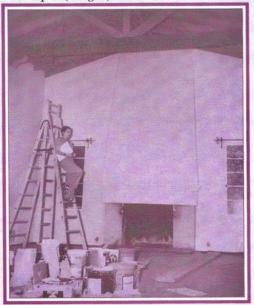
have no complaints, though; I've been very fortunate. Singing is one of my great loves, and to be able to sing those songs in KISS ME, KATE was a privilege. One thing I would have loved was to go into opera. I did in a concert—I did CARMEN in concert with Arthur Fiedler—and I loved it. I have a friend who's a wonderful pianist, and every Sunday we

work on French things and Italian songs for my own pleasure. SS: You wouldn't perform publicly? PM: No, no; honey, I'm 89. (Laughs) SS: You've certainly had a life filled with

wonderful success and experiences. PM: Yes, some wonderful experiences. I remember a good will trip that a lot of us from Hollywood made to Mexico. There were three plane loads of us. Louella Parsons, Hedda Hopper, Norma Shearer, Wallace Beery, David Selznick, Frank Capra, Mickey Rooney-a whole bunch of us flew in these plane loads; they'd never seen so many stars in one big group. We landed in Mexico and they swamped the plane; we couldn't get off . We got to the Reformer Hotel and outside they kept calling for Wallace Beery. They kept crying, "Pancho Villa!" He'd starred in a picture as Pancho Villa. Well, thousands of people were out in the street calling for him. He'd had a couple of drinks and he'd go out



on the balcony and wave at them. Then he'd stagger back inside and say, "Give me another drink!" (Laughs) In those days, you didn't fly directly to Mexico City; there was a stopover. I shared a suite with Kay Francis and Lady Sylvia Ashley, who'd been married to Gable. Selznick came over and said, "I've rented a boat. Let's go out on the bay." So we went and Frank Capra came along. Well, he chased me all over the boat and tried to pull the hairpins out of my hair. Lady Ashley said, "Leave her alone!" When we got to the Reformer Hotel in Mexico, he knocked on my door and tried to get into my room and I had to slam the door in his face. Well, years later, it was the anniversary of Columbia Pictures and they were honoring Barbra Streisand and all these other people. And I was sitting at my table and this little old man came over to me and sat down and said, "Can you ever forgive me?" And it was Frank Capra! (Laughs)



SS: It took him long enough to apologize! PM: There's a postscript. David Selznick was producing a film called THE PARADINE CASE, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, and they wanted me to play the woman in it. So I went over to Selznick's studio and he said, "Pat, I want to tell you something. Frank was way out of line in Mexico and you were such a lady." I said, "Thank you, David." And he said, "By the way, I'm going to Encinada for the weekend; would you like to come?" (Laughs) SS: Boy, you had your share, didn't you?

PM: Oh, yeah, quite a few! SS: It's a shame that you didn't get the role in THE PARADINE CASE.

PM: That was one role I would have loved to have had. I knew Hitchcock. I knew he and his wife; they were part of the British Colony. He was a darling. He had the sweetest wife and his daughter. He loved to eat and he had a tendency-he'd be sitting in a restaurant and he'd fall asleep right in the chair. Especially after a big dinnerhe'd just sit there and doze off.

SS: And everyone would go on talking. PM: Yes! (Laughs) He was a delight! You know, it's terrible-people who write about Hollywood miss so many things. It's wonderful to write all the things that might titillate you-but the people in Hollywood were lovely; they

were warm and wonderful. I was at a birthday party for Janis Paige the other night, talking to a famous agent, and I said, "I'm so grateful that I've been in this business. With all the faults that people have-with the bitches and the bastards and all the things they try to pull-underneath it all these are the warmest and most humane people anywhere. We have to portray life, and in order to do so you have to really feel it by osmosis. You can talk about all the stupid things people do-especially actors, although maybe it's just

publicized more-but underneath everything there's a sense of humanity. The stories about Joan Crawford-yes, she had all these qualities. Of all the people in the world, she knew she was her own product. She wasn't selling a coat or a car or a house; she had to sell herself! That was her life! But I spent evenings with her and afternoons-had lunch with herand it was a completely different picture. Certainly, ambition was part of it. You become ambitious and defend yourself, and sometimes people do it in a wrong way. But I admired her determination. I should have been more feisty, but it's not my nature, I can't. I expected the people who worked for me to do that. It's the ones who are feisty, like Joan Crawford . .

SS: Like Bette Davis, too. PM: Like Bette Davis! I'll never forget-I was in New York and she wasn't working, and she had to work. We were at a party for Photoplay and there were some important people there, and Bette Davis was eyeing them. My best friend was with me, and she said to Bette Davis, "I just love everything you did!"-and Bette Davis said, "I wish you'd tell them about that!" (Laughs)

last story? PM: Well, I did an awful movie called QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS; I was another huntress in that. They shot it at the studio, and the lion that they had to attack the hero was the original MGM lion. He was so old that they had to give him false teeth. (Laughs) Every time they'd say shoot and he was supposed to attack the hero, he'd lie down instead. (laughs) The sets were not air conditioned back then, and it was so hot that we'd open the doors on the soundstage. Well, one day we weren't paying attention and out he walked and he went

strolling down La Cienga Boulevard.



SS: Only in Hollywood! PM: Only in Hollywood! (Laughs)



HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC REDUX

Continued from page 41

band by a returned, long-lost suitor-only to learn, far too late, that he is a cloven-hoofed demon, and their heavenly shipboard honeymoon is actually bound for Hell. Irving rejected Caine's scenario, on the grounds that he was too old to be convincing as the supernatural seducer, and asked Caine to return to the safer, more age-appropriate ancient-mariner theme of the Dutchman. Caine tried, but Irving proved an impossible collaborator. Caine's conception of the Dutchman was either too unsympathetic, too brutal, too young, or too tall—what-ever. The project was finally dropped "... in spite of the utmost sincerity on all sides [including Stoker] our efforts came to nothing, and I think this result was perhaps due to something more serious than the limitation of my own powers. The truth is that, great actor as Irving was, the dominating element of his personality was for many years a hampering difficulty.

Given all this, is it possible that Irving was even

approachable to play Dracula?

Despite Stoker's press puffery in Chicago, Dracula as presented in the novel shares almost nothing with the stage characters Stoker enumerated, besides the frequent trappings of aristocracy. According to first-hand accounts, Irving's interpretation of Shylock was revolutionarily nuanced, changing forever antisemitic stereotypes Stoker nonetheless imputed to the Count (a hook-nosed offense to Christianity who hoards gold, kills babies for their blood, and so on). Irving's Mephistopheles was said to be both intellectual and ironic. Beyond the novelty of his supernatural parasitism, Dracula, as the character Stoker penned, is a monomaniacal bore. Irving's Matthias in THE BELLS and Louis VIII were unsympathetic characters nonetheless given theatrical dimension by their terror of persecution. Dracula is persecuted, but never, even at the moment of his death, does he seem the least bit terrified. Not once does Stoker give his vampire a theatrical moment of fear or contrition. The bad twin in THE LYONS MAIL is certainly a villain (half of a showy dual role), but hardly a vampire. Iachimo in CYMBERLINE is an Iago-like schemer who sows suspicions of infidelity, but, unlike lago, confesses and is forgiven. For Dracula, there is no redemption, no dramatic reversal, no irony, no charisma.

In short-no applause.

Dracula never approaches Irving's basic requirements for a stage role, and, unless we regard Stoker as a delusional sycophant, it may be worth considering that his account to the Chicago reporter might have been nothing more than a bit of poker-faced blarney. For, as Frederick Donaghey also noted, "He had written, in Dracula, a 'shilling shocker,' however successful a one, and was frank about it."

The Irving legend persists, in part, because Dracula itself is so permeated with trappings of the stage. Dracula is the monarch of vampires, just as Irving was the king of the theater. Imagistic references to MACBETH, Irving's favorite role, recur throughout the novel (a cursed warrior-king in a desolate castle, three weird sisters, somnabulism, blood imagery, etc.) and other Shakespearean allusions abound. A supernatural shipwreck, coupled with a magus who drives the elements and has an animalized slave at his disposal all seem dark reflections of THE TEMPEST. Images of Irving as a cloaked Mephistopheles seem positively Dracula-like to the modern viewer—until one realizes that Stoker's Dracula never wears a cloak except for one brief wall-crawl. For the rest of the book, he is a cadaverous, puritanical figure clothed in black. By contrast, Irving's Mephistopheles was a flamboyant peacock; black-and-white reproductions of his costume fail to convey the full impact of his brilliant red raiment. Dracula sinks into the shadows. Mephistopheles grabs the spotlight

the spotlight.

At the time of *Dracula*'s publication, not a single reviewer drew a parallel between Irving and Dracula. There was, however, considerable vampire gossip about another theatrical luminary—the actress Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the apparent model for Philip Burne-Jones' scandalous painting "The Vampire," first exhibited in London within weeks of *Dracula*'s publication. Burne-Jones' canvas depicted a moonlit bedroom wherein a crouching female figure, teeth bared, gloats over a prostrate male, whose life has been drained away through a wound over his heart. The painting was accompanied by the now legendary verses penned by the artist's cousin, Rudyard Kipling:

A fool there was and he made his prayer (Even as you and I!)
To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair (We called her the woman who did not care)
But the fool he called her his lady fair—
(Even as you and I!)

Commentators have focused so relentlessly on Irving's influence on Dracula that they may have missed a more obvious theatrical model: Herbert Beerbohm Tree as Svengali in the 1895 stage adaptation of George du Maurier's Trilby, published as a novel to an astonishing public reception the previous year. Profusely illustrated by the author himself, Trilby is widely regarded as the bestselling novel of its time. Svengali is a malignant mesmerist who transforms a pliable artist's model (Trilby) into a superstar of the musical stage. Unfortunately, the hypnotic process drains and kills her. Du Maurier describes Svengali as an "incubus" and in one memorable illustration depicts him as half-human and half-spider-just as Stoker would present Dracula as a creepy amalgam of man, lizard, and bat. In his human form, Svengali provides a much closer physical model for Dracula than any of Irving's characterizations. He has the profile of a predatory bird, not to mention pointed ears. Svengali sports a beard, a style Dracula also adopts, at least for a couple of scenes.

As an actor-manager, Tree was Irving's closest rival, and, when it was announced that Tree had acquired the stage rights to *Trilby*, the *Stage* lamented that Henry Irving had not struck first. *Trilby* was a theatrical gold mine, enabling Tree to build Her Majesty's (later His Majesty's) Theatre, and eventually to found the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. It is unreasonable to assume that Stoker wasn't keenly aware of Tree's greatest success, especially because it revolved around the theme of mesmerism, which greatly interested him.

Read as an unconscious parable of the sexual contradictions of its time rather than as a supernatural thriller, Dracula can be a profoundly disturbing book. In Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siecle Culture (Oxford University Press, 1986), Brain Dijkstra cuts to the heart of the matter: "In Stoker's novel ... all aspects of the period's suspicions about the degenerative tendencies in women have been brought together in such an effortless fashion that it is clear that for the author these were not so much a part of the symbolic structures of fantasy as the conditions of universal truth. Stoker's work demonstrates how thoroughly the war waged by the 19th-century male culture against the dignity and self-respect of women had been fought . . Stoker clearly was a man of limited intelligence, typical of the fairly well-educated, fairly well-off, middle-minded middle class. But he had a remarkably coherent sociological imagination and a brilliant talent

for fluid, natural-sounding, visually descriptive prose. Together these qualities made it possible for him to write, perhaps without ever completely realizing what he had done, a narrative destined to become the 20th century's basic commonplace book of the antifeminine

obsession.

The feminist critic Andrea Dworkin goes even further. "The women are transformed into predators, great foul parasites . . . As humans, they begin to learn sex in dying. And the men, the human suitors and husbands . . . are given a new kind of sex, too . . . watching the women die." The story "goes beyond metaphor in its intuitive rendering of an oncoming century filled with sexual horror: the throat as a female genital; sex and death as synonyms; killing as a sex act; slow dying as sensuality; men watching the slow dying, and the watching is sexual; mutilation of the female body as male heroism and adventure; callous, ruthless, predatory lust as the one-note meaning of sexual desire; intercourse itself needing blood, someone's, somewhere, to count as a sex act in a world excited by sadomasochism, bored by the dull thud thud of the literal fuck.

Clearly, such appraisals are colored as much by the sexual politics of our own time as by those of the Victorians . . . but it is a rare book indeed that can still incite such passionate responses over a century after its publication. To be fair and to illustrate the amazing elasticity of Dracula's subtexts-the book has also been read as a veiled feminist myth. In Woman and the Demon (Harvard University Press, 1982), Ellen Terry's biographer Nina Auerbach points out that between the lines of Dracula is a story of female transformation and empowerment. The women grow stronger and are more vividly portrayed as the novel progresses, while "the Count is reduced to an increasingly immobilized catalyst . . . The power of Dracula himself narrows to the dimensions of his vulnerable coffin, for despite his ambitious designs on the human race, he seems to be the world's

last surviving male vampire."

No doubt, Bram Stoker would also resist the suggestion that his novel was a misogynistic diatribe--did not, after all, his story concern above all else the protection of innocent women by chivalrous men? (As Peter Gay points out, "Anti-feminism was not solely a symptom of castration fears. It was a display of ignorance, of misplaced chivalry, or of a timid clinging to traditionother kinds of fear.") There is nothing to suggest that Stoker had any comprehension of the larger irony of this attitude, or of a society that had made a fetish, even a requirement, of women's subservient helplessness. Dracula can be read—in our time, at least—as an almost transparent metaphor for the Victorian confusion, guilt, and anger over the "proper" role of women. The attack of the vampire sexualizes women, who, according to the double standard of the time, must then be punished and purified through more sex and violence (penetrated by stakes, etc.). The whole notion of "the un-dead" also seems an obvious representation of the life force or libido in suspended animation, a state of sexual limbo, change, or indecision.

What, then, of the woman who had the most intimate knowledge of all concerning Bram Stoker's imagi-

nation and sexuality?

Stoker had been married since 1878 to the former Florence Anne Lemon Balcombe, a celebrated beauty whom George du Maurier considered to be one of the three most beautiful women he had ever seen. Her former suitor having been none other than Oscar Wilde, Florence had effectively captured the imaginations of the creators of Svengali, Dracula, and Dorian Gray. Florence certainly attained a unique position in Victorian arts and letters. Rarely, if ever, has a woman been the focus of quite so much literary demonism.



Mrs. Patrick Campbell was depicted as "The Vampire" in an 1897 painting by Philip Burne-Jones.

She made the Cinderella transition from penniless Irish girl to London society hostess with great relish. Horace Wyndam remembered that "Mrs. Bram," as she was known, "was a charming woman and brim full of Irish wit and impulsiveness." The striking, nearly Pre-Raphaelite features of Florence Stoker had graced even the sketch pad of Sir Edward Burne Jones (who had designed for the Lyceum), and one fashionable artist executed an oil portrait notable for its link to the femme fatale iconography so prevalent in the art of the period. Walter Frederick Osborne, a well known Dublin landscape artist and portraitist, created a likeness that was accepted for exhibition by the Royal Academy of Arts in 1895. Osborne's portrait, judging from a magazine reproduction of the time, was a good likeness but one with a subtle air of languorous decadence. The subject, with a sly, knowing expression, reclines against the skin of a dead animal, a visual motif that had become a virtual cliche in popular depictions of la belle dame sans merci: fatal women were commonly presented as being surrounded, attended by, or even merged with predatory beasts. No doubt it was just fashion as well, but the ambiguous portrait has resonances with both Dracula, and, in a curious way, The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891).

Farson recounts the description given him by Noel's daughter, Ann MacCaw: "She told me that she doubted if 'Granny Moo,' as Florence was called, was really capable of love. 'She was cursed by her great beauty and the need to maintain it. In my knowledge now, she was very anti-sex. After having my father in her early twen-

ties, I think she was quite put off."

CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE . . .

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LEFT: Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing brought their Dracula/Van Helsing double act to a fiery finish in THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA (1974). RIGHT: Dr. Van Helsing (Cushing) explains the finer points of vampirism to one of the seven brothers (Howard Keel? Russ Tamblyn? Jacques D'Amboise?) in THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES (1974).

VAN HELSING

Continued from page 49

by Stan Dragoti, is a gentle spoof with George Hamilton acquitting himself well as a Dracula out of step in modern-day Manhattan. Certainly time has not aged the disco era well and some of the humor now comes from seeing cigarettes in play as comic props, talk of unprotected sex (as Cindy Sondheim, Susan St. James says, "I'm not on the pill, but I'm fine from the 12th to the 19th."), and the product placement of Kentucky Fried Chicken before Colonel Sanders cried fowl over the word "Fried." It's also amusing to see cabs at a going rate of 75 cents for the first half mile and such a breezy attitude toward pot smoking. While the film may have dated, it's still pleasant enough and Hamilton dances smashingly in his Dunhill tuxedo. He seems to take his inspiration from John Carradine's Dracula more than Lugosi or Lee, and he is quite adept with his cape. Richard Benjamin plays Jeffrey Rosenbaum, a descendant of "Fritz" Van Helsing. Rosenbaum frets that Dracula is the better lover—and indeed, by story's end, he's content to share the wearing Drac's cape on Saturday nights with Lieutenant Ferguson of the NYPD (Dick Shawn).

In 1979, the same bumper year in which Herzog's NOSFERATU and the comic box-office hit LOVE AT FIRST BITE appeared, DRACULA: A LOVE STORY was released by Universal. After previews and considerable lobby chuckles, the title was restored to simply DRACULA. Starring was another Broadway Dracula in the person of Frank Langella, who had portrayed the Count to great acclaim in a revival of the Deane/Balderston version. On Broadway amidst the twee black-and-white settings of Edward Gorey, Langella's forceful personality was able to charm if not always thrill—though the staking scene, in which the dying vampire broke through his coffin lid and reached out for his tormentors, drew a collective gasp from the audience. The actor exhibited considerable panache and flashed his cape with great brio.

In the film, however, Langella's Byronic Demon Lover is turned into a blow-dried Lothario who seduces Miss Lucy (Kate Nelligan) in a Maurice Binder (title designer of the Bond films) swirling montage of psychedelic color. All that's missing is another version of "Strange Love" (the song from 1971's LUST FOR A VAMPIRE) sung by Shirley Bassey. The musical scoring by John Williams is one of his best compositions, yet the handsomely mounted film is otherwise filled with odd choices. It retains the play's bizarre switch in character names, turning Mina (Jan Francis) into Lucy and Lucy into Mina. Not for the

first time, Lucy (who was Mina) becomes the daughter of Dr. Jack Seward (Donald Pleasence), but screenwriter W. D. Richter makes Mina (who was Lucy) the daughter of Professor Abraham Van Helsing (Laurence Olivier)! One minute Mina is emaciated and rotting and then she's beautiful again. She's destroyed not once, but twice—for no discernible reason. Several sequences, such as Dracula's batlike crawl down the wall and the arrival of the ship at Whitby, seem to have been cribbed from the BBC television version. (They're in the novel, too, of course.) The enigmatic dramatic conclusion is still difficult to follow, as the King Vampire is hauled up into the sunlight to burn and rot and seemingly turn into a kite, after which he's borne away on the wind. One half expects the Banks family from MÁRY POPPINS (1964) to turn up and wave goodbye!

Perhaps of the bombastic brayings of Jerome Dempsey as the Broadway revival Van Helsing, the less said the better. For the film, Universal chose for the role the accepted master of the British stage and one of the greatest actors of all time, Lord Laurence Olivier. Unfortunately, Olivier turns in a rather disinterested performance—though he himself must have liked it, since he all but repeated it the following year in THE JAZZ SINGER (1980). Van Helsing was stripped of his status as a vampire authority and instead was made merely a concerned father. With his standard "little Jewish man" accent cribbed from character actor Albert Basserman (1940's FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT), Olivier made for a frail Van Helsing with none of the force of his former stage costar, Peter Cushing. While the play's confrontation scene between Dracula and his nemesis survived into the screenplay, the dynamics were considerably lessened. Olivier's best moment comes when Van Helsing discovers his dead daughter—as a favor to director John Badham, he echoes his classic stage performance of OEDIPUS (1946) and gives vent to a heartbreaking howl of pain and anguish.

Peter Cushing never saw the 1979 production of DRACULA, but was amused to learn that Olivier had "borrowed" Albert Basserman for his performance. "Albert Basserman, lovely actor! He didn't have any chin, did he? He was what we used to call a chinless wonder, with a sort of little fluffy mustache. Oh, how clever! And

Larry was absolutely brilliant at accents!"

Sadly forgotten is the Cable Ace award-winning TV presentation of Bob Hall and David Richmond's colorful and vigorous adaptation, THE PASSION OF DRAC-ULA (1980). Christopher Bernau's powerful, magnetic Drac-

ula, which he had created in the off-Broadway production, was a very rich and theatrical characterization. He was opposed in the television version by Malachi Throne, a Van Helsing much in the Van Sloan and Cushing tradition. We have a stolid man in his middle age, articulate and knowing, convinced of a danger that others cannot understand. He's not as agile physically as Cushing, who leaps windmill fans and bolts down refectory tables. Yet he has the same firm authority, bravery, and confidence to confront the unknown shared by both Cushing and Van Sloan in the role. Van Helsing in this production gets the King Laugh speech that is one of the wellsprings of the inner workings of the professor's character in the novel, but seldom appears in adaptations. A mixture of melodrama and humor, THE PASSION OF DRACULA is a delicious concoction. The Showtime production's continued unavailability is a loss to vampire lovers, and Christopher Bernau's splendid Dracula deserves a much wider audience.

Klaus Kinski emerged again in 1986 to reprise his vampire portrayal in VAMPIRE IN VENICE, written and directed by Augusto Caminito. "Time has no meaning in a life that never ends," Nosferatu says-and it certainly seems as though the film will never end, either. A ponderous affair with a lot of murky views of Venice and a lot of extras traipsing about in 18th-century costume, VAMPIRE IN VENICE features Christopher Plummer as the Van Helsingesque Professor Catalano, the world's foremost authority on vampires. "Shunned by Death itself," this Nosferatu, without the famous makeup and sporting a shaggy "Igor" wig, is a rapist, not a seducer. By the time Catalano fails in his attempt to quell the vampire, decides to end it all, and jumps into the Canal, the viewer may want to follow him.

Van Helsing's appearance in Fred Dekker's fond homage to the Universal Monsters, THE MONSTER SQUAD (1987), is mostly limited to a pretitle sequence set in Dracula's Castle (complete with Browningesque armadillos). Played by British veteran actor Jack Gwillim, Van Helsing is in full action mode: lean, goateed, armed with stake and crossbow-but sucked into a Vortex of Evil. Van Helsing reappears just in time at the end of this rather awkwardly scripted film to give young monster-hunter-in-training Sean Crenshaw (Andrew Gower) the thumbs up before—in a gesture not unlike Sherlock Holmes clasping Professor Moriarty in a death grip at the Reichenbach Falls-dragging Dracula (Duncan Regher) into Limbo. (Jack Gwillim had a long history on both the British and American stage. Among his many roles were Colonel Pickering in the 1981 revival of MY FAIR LADY and as Duncan in fellow-Van Helsing interpreter Christopher Plummer's 1988 production of MACBETH.)

Scripted by Shane Black and director Dekker, THE MONSTER SQUAD rests somewhat uneasily between a poignant fondness for the days of Famous Monsters and a genuine desire to scare. Somehow, kids getting their hands on real guns doesn't play quite so innocently any more; this kiddie romp has a surprisingly high body count. Still, there are some nice individual moments. The Monster Squad's clubhouse is adorned with Universal stills and Hammer posters. One of Dracula's transformations into a bat is done in the old John Fulton way, as an animated shadow on the wall. The Frankenstein Monster (Tom Noonan) still just wants to be loved. That Noonan is able to capture that classic Karloff quality is one of the film's greatest successes. The makeup recreations evoke the Universal look without copying it. The studio refused to grant permission to recreate the originals, and the monsters—not inappropriately—look more like the Aurora model versions of the period being sentimentalized. Unfortunately, the script comes apart just like the Auroras did when their glue got old, but not before Jonathan Gries offers an excellent turn as the

Werewolf. (He gets to paraphrase Henry Hull's last line in 1935's WEREWOLF OF LONDON, giving thanks for the bullet that ends his suffering.)

"Ja, Dracul—vampires do exist. This one we fight. This one we face.

-BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA (1992)

Sir Anthony Hopkins is one of the great actors of his generation. He has an Oscar for his portrayal of one of the most vivid villains of recent memory, Hannibal Lector in SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (1991). He also has three BAFTRAS and two Emmys (for his performances as accused kidnapper Bruno Hauptmann in 1976's THE LINDBERGH KIDNAPPING CASE and as Adolph Hitler in 1981's THE BUNKER.). Onstage, he has been both a memorable MACBETH (1972) and KING LEAR (1986). Like fellow Van Helsing Frank Finlay, Hopkins has specialized in portraying literary and historical figures, including Richard the Lionhearted in THE LION IN WINTER (1968), Quasimodo in THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (1982), Richard Nixon in NIXON (1995), Pablo Picasso in SURVIVING PICASSO (1996), and John Quincy Adams in AMISTAD (1997). Trained at RADA, Hopkins joined yet another future Van Helsing, Laurence Olivier, during Olivier's tenure at the UK National Theatre

Beware Thanksgiving," a tag line apt to strike more fear in the hearts of turkeys than in horror fans, was the phrase used on buttons to promote Francis Ford Coppola's version of Stoker's Dracula, rather than the "Love Never Dies" blurb emblazoned on posters. The latter was a more accurate description, capturing the film's main variance from Stoker. Richard Matheson had used the reincarnated love angle in the Dan Curtis televersion, but screenwriter James V. Hart, professing great adherence to Stoker, actually turned the piece into a love story of a misunderstood Prince instead of the horrorfilled tale of an implacable monster. Once Winona Ryder, who played Mina Murray, piqued Francis Ford Coppola's interest in the project, DRACULA escalated into a grand extravaganza, a Zefferellian fever dream. In Coppola and Hart's fin de siecle fantasy BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, it is therefore not too surprising that we find one of the most eccentric portrayals ever of Stoker's grand Dutchman.

Hart appropriated the events of Vlad Tepes' life as revealed in In Search of Dracula (1972) by Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, a resource also used by Matheson. The film opens with a prologue that has little to do with Stoker and everything to do with the special conceit of the filmmakers. We are treated to a shadow play of warrior Vlad the Impaler that resembles something out of Kurosawa by way of John Boorman. Next follows Dracula's grisly condemnation of God-or rather "Dracul's" condemnation of God, since another of the film's conceits is that Dracula's name when used is seldom the one we know. The screenplay spends so much time on the romantic reincarnation theme that there's precious little room for anything else. The film is opera without the music, Stoker by way of Puccini.

Gary Oldman is admittedly intriguing as the aged Count. Saddled with one of the more bizarre hairdressings in film-a sort of bouffant geisha number that makes him look like Beulah Bondi playing the father in a road company of FLOWER DRUM SONG-Oldman's ripe overplaying sets a standard for excess that becomes the film's standard acting approach. (He's certainly matched by Hopkins as Van Helsing.) Sadly, Oldman's Old Dracula quickly morphs into Oldman's Young Dracula, complete with hippie hair and Carnaby Street blue sunglasses. When his big love scene with

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Mina finally arrives, he has no chance to match the power of former Draculas Lee and Lugosi.

Van Helsing: Blood. The diseases of the blood, such as syphilis, that concern us here. The very name venereal diseases, the diseases of Venus, imputes to them divine origin, and they are involved in that sex problem about which the ethics and ideals of Christian civilization are concerned. In fact, civilization and syphilization have advanced together.

Van Helsing's entrance at Hillingham is staged as a tribute to Father Merrin's entrance in THE EXORCIST (1973). Most notable in Hopkins' performance is an expansion on Abraham's wicked sense of humor and tendency to be brusque. The actor's apparent over-the-top portrayal is actually well based within Stoker's text; it is simply a feature which few actors and writers have explored. This Van Helsing is droll, as in the text quoted above, a sort of maverick mentor. In crisis performing a risky transfusion, the doctor has time to jest with Arthur Holmwood (Cary Elwes)—"The last drop [of your blood]? Thank you, you're very welcome, ja—I don't ask as much as that—not yet." At table with Jonathan Harker (Keanu Reeves) and Mina, he offhandedly informs the young couple of staking and decapitating their friend Lucy Westenra (Sadie Frost), all the while carving into a very rare roast of beef. The doctor/teacher/sage also seems to have a magician's working knowledge of Houdini-like disappearances. Hopkins and Coppola expand on these qualities and play Van Helsing as one of "God's madmen," who has seen so much of life that his resultant existentialism is countered by a fierce devotion to both science and the power of faith. At the line "This is the foe I have fought all my life," Van Helsing gives a laugh worthy of Lear and is soon seen humping young Quincy Morris' leg like an excited dog, madly declaring victim Lucy as a "bitch of the Devil, a whore of darkness." Morris (Bill Campbell) calls him an "old coot" and,

as Van Helsing suddenly stops and announces that "we may still save her precious soul, but not on an empty stomach" we in the audience might tend to agree. Hopkins pulls out all the stops. In his wide-brimmed hat (a style also used by Hugh Jackman in VAN HELSING), leading his band of suitors in pursuit of the Beast, he puts an astonishingly eccentric spin on the old boy. If not completely in the serious Van Sloan and Cushing traditions, Hopkins is one of the most memorable features of the last motion picture version of the original story that we're likely to see for some time. While not the definitive adaptation it purported to be, BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA is nevertheless a fascinating and lush variant.

"She's almost dead . . ."
—DRACULA DEAD AND LOVING IT (1995)

Compared to LOVE AT FIRST BITE, Mel Brooks' DRACULA DEAD AND LOVING IT (1995) is the better laugh-getter. While it was a disappointment at the box office, the film has proven almost a decade later to be a fun exercise and a worthy example of director and star Brooks' exceptional talents in comic timing. If not a classic on the level of Brooks' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN (1974), DRACULA DEAD AND LOVING IT contains at least two sequences as funny as anything the master has put on film. The first is a small scene with two great comic actors, veteran Harvey Korman as a Nigel Brucean Dr. Seward, and the talented Peter MacNicol, brilliantly channeling Dwight Frye's Renfield as he stuffs his mouth with insects while enjoying polite conversation with his doctor. The scene is simple and very fine. The familiar staking of Lucy Westenra (Lysette Anthony) in Brooks' able hands is a classic comedy moment, with Jonathan Harker (Steven Webber) encountering far more plasma than ever seeped through Baroness Meinster's robes in THE BRIDES OF DRACULA.

Brooks takes on the role of Dr. Van Helsing and, as Laurence Olivier before him, channels Albert Basserman for his accent and Sigmund Freud for his costume and look. Anthony (looking for all the world like Andree Melly in BRIDES OF DRACULA), Clive Revill (in a Michael Ripper role), and Anne Bancroft (as Madame Ouspenskaya, the Gypsy Woman) all stand out. The very difficult task of walking the tightrope between menace and comic mayhem in creating a farcical Dracula is easily managed by Leslie Nielsen.

Ever since the rhapsodic waltz in Don Sharp's THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, it's been the custom to give bloodsuckers a musical moment or two. THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS (1967), LOVE AT FIRST BITE, and VAN HELSING have all featured them. The one in DRACULA DEAD AND LOVING IT, featuring a large glass mirror, is an excellent example. While perhaps not a sterling classic, writers Steve Haberman and Rudy De Luca's loving sendup of Browning, Hammer, and Coppola is aging nicely—and loving it.

nicely—and loving it.

Christopher Plummer brought considerable panache to Abraham Van Helsing in WES CRAVEN PRESENTS DRACULA 2000 (released as DRACULA 2001 in the UK). Plummer has long previous experience in strolling the Scarlet Streets, including his performance as Sherlock Holmes in MURDER BY DECREE (1978).

Turns out Old Abraham was infected with Dracula's blood when he caught and staked him all those years ago. Carfax Abbey—now known as Carfax Antiquities—has become a relic of architecture in the London of the New Millennium. In reality, the building houses the undead corpse of "Draculea" himself. "Draculea, not myth. No raving of a mad Irish novelist. Oh, no, he's real, I assure you," the ever vigilant Van Helsing reveals. There are such things. Young protege Simon Sheppard (Johnny Lee Miller) responds with, "This is the fucking Twilight Zone."

DRACULA 2000 is distinguished by an impressively handsome production. Peter Pau's cinematography, Carol Spier's production design, and the editing of Patrick Devaney Flanagan and director and coauthor Patrick Lussier is wonderfully inventive. There's so much to admire in this stylish continuation of the seemingly eternal battle between Van Helsing and Dracula that it comes as a great disappointment that the final reel becomes overburdened with a confused religious parable. The secret of Dracula's unending life in death—he is the eternally cursed Judas Iscariot! Van Helsing has become his keeper, "Always I have struggled to discover who he really is, living on his blood filtered through leeches to stay alive." And the daughter of Abraham, Mary Heller (Justine Waddell), is the New Mary of the Millennium.

Before the script goes batty, DRACULA 2000 features a strong supporting cast of young players, including Danny Masterson, Nathan Fillion, Lochlyn Munro, Jeri Ryan, Omar Epps, and Shane West. (In 2003's THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMAN, West, playing Tom Sawter, encountered another old friend of Drac-

ula's—Mina Harker.) The Count is played by Gerard Butler in full Langella-style Lord Byron hairdo. He walks a tricky line and succeeds very well, even managing that old chestnut of "I never drink . . . coffee."

And thus we come full circle to this year's VAN HELSING. Professor Van Helsing has become in some ways as famous as his nemesis, Count Dracula. Certainly the men who have played him are a marvelous band. From the venerable Edward Van Sloan to the iconic power of Peter Cushing who defined him for a new generation, from a trio of lauded Shakespeareans to the loving parody of a master comedian and on to a 21st-century matinee idol, Stoker's wise Dutchman has continued to enthrall and engage our imaginations. Never mind that in his latest screen incarnation he's morphed into a videogame Indiana Jones or that in Broadway's current musicalization he learnt his trade in Jamaica—Van Helsing, like Dracula, will always be with us. We can only imagine what form Van Helsing will take next. We only hope he brings the cocoa.

SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

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gree or another on each of his subsequent films. There was even some outrage over JEEPERS CREEPERS (2001), though the film downplayed the issue by focusing on 23-year-old Justin Long in the lead role. It was obvious that a lot of people simply didn't think Salva should be allowed to make films-period! With JEEPERS CREEPERS 2, Salva appears to have simply decided that he's in a lose-lose proposition and opted to give his detractors exactly what they expect. He's fashioned a a film for which you expect to see a disclaimer stating that all the boys—at least the undressed ones-are over 18. (They mostly appear to be the usual 20-something movie highschool kids.) The whole idea is inherently odd. What exactly is one to make of Salva cooking up a concept grounded in a predatory monster with a penchant for making dinner out of predominately young, predominately male, and predominately shirtless victims wearing perilously low-hung bluejeans? What, indeed! It's almost impossible not to have an amateur psychology field day with this. Furthermore, Salva twice presents his monster trussed up like a scarecrow (read: crucified) with two other non-monstrous scarecrows! (Let's not even bring in the question of the initials of the title.) Much like the film's humor, the real question is how conscious any of this is-and on that score, we have no answers. There's just no way to ignore the sheer number of beefcake shots in the movie. How seriously to take any of this is another matter. It's so over-the-top that it would hardly be surprising if the filmmaker was having

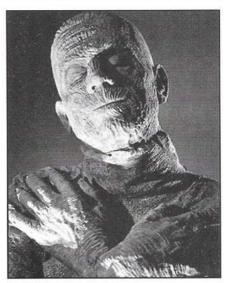
DVD extras include commentaries by Victor Salva, Jonathan Breck, cast members, and production crew; the behind-the-scenes documentary A DAY IN HELL, several featurettes; a photo gallery; and storyboards of scenes ultimately dropped. Whether or not the Creeper is slated to become one of the iconic figures of modern horror remains to be seen, but Slava's creation lacks one seeming essential of such "crowd pleasers" as Michael Myers, Freddy Kruger, and Jason Voorhees—a quickly identifiable musical theme. Every good monster needs one.

-Ken Hanke

JACK PIERCE: THE MAN
BEHIND THE MONSTERS
Visionary Cinema—\$25.00
GREASEPAINT & GORE:
THE HAMMER MONSTERS OF
PHIL LEAKEY & ROY ASHTON
Tomahawk Media—£19.99

Two labor of love productions about three of the top makeup artists in horror film history cover their subjects in completely different fashions. JACK PIERCE: THE MAN BEHIND THE MON-STERS is a video record of a June 2000 stage presentation dramatizing the famed artist's life and career. Program creator and Visionary Cinema president Scott Essmann carefully researched the project and got some top makeup artists to recreate such Pierce's classic creations as Frankenstein's Monster and The Mummy. While fright fans may think they know everything there is to know about Jack Pierce, I can't say I've ever heard any of them discussing Pierce's early life as a professional ball player and bit player in films.

The show stars Jerry Shields as Pierce (in—naturally—a wonderful makeup) telling his life story as he refers to pages in a red binder. (It might represent Pierce's scrapbook, but on the other hand it may simply be the script.) Occasionally he react to an unseen booming voice (Bob Stilwell, standing in for Pierce's employers). Pierce's famous monsters are paraded before us in a series of recreations of famous film scenes—and, at one point, a backstage scene between Pierce and Conrad



Veidt (Alan August), who makes up as THE MAN WHO LAUGHS (1928) during the dialogue. Daniel Roebuck offers a fine Ygor and Kevin Isola is spot on as Basil Rathbone.

JACK PIERCE: THE MAN BEHIND THE MONSTERS is an informative and vital DVD addition to the collection of any classic monster fan. The extras alone—footage from a 1957 episode of THIS IS YOUR LIFE, with Pierce presenting Boris Karloff with one of the Frankenstein Monster's original neck bolts; behind-the-scenes footage of the stage show; comments from makeup master Dick Smith and horror's number one fan, Bob Burns—make it well worth owning.

From England comes GREASEPAINT & GORE: THE HAMMER MONSTERS OF PHIL LEAKEY & ROY ASHTON, twin documentaries giving the lowdown on Hammer's relatively unsung makeup artists. Using footage from public-domain trailers; new interviews with several Hammer veterans, including Chris

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A MONSTROUSLY FUNNY TALE OF UNLIKELY FIENDS—ER, FRIENDS

BORIS AND BELLA

Carolyn Crimi Illustrated by Gris Grimly www. madcreator.com

It will take a Halloween party like no other—a full creature-feature of beasts, ghosts, and creepy-crawlies, and some of the fanciest dance moves since Morrie Mummy shook a leg clean off. So grab a mug of ghoul drool and join the fun!

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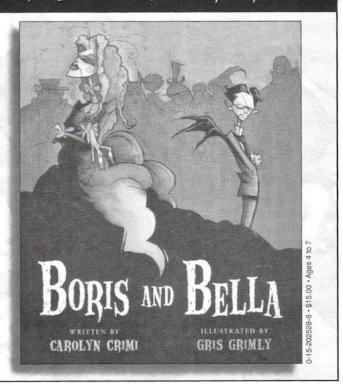
"Crimi's corpse-fresh text and Grimly's fiendish visual details make an equally pleasing pair."—Publishers Weekly

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SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

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topher Lee and Hazel Court; and recordings and interviews with the two artists themselves, the documentaries cover Hammer from the beginning through the filming of RASPUTIN THE MAD MONK (1966). The behind-the-scenes photos and sketches are from the personal collections of the creative duo.

There are some unanswered questions—unasked questions, really. For instance, we never learn why Phil Leakey left Hammer after THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1958), even though he worked elsewhere until 1975, nor why the producers arbitrarily end their documentaries with RASPUTIN, when Ashton occasionally worked with the studio up through HANDS OF THE RIPPER (1971).

Still, Creators Bruce Sachs and Russell Wall are to be commended for giving Leakey and Ashton their long overdue due. A word of warning, however—GREASEPAINT & GORE is a Region O NTSC disc, so please make sure your DVD machine can accommodate it.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE Alpha Video —\$6.98

Understandably, the news of yet another film version of Robert Louis Stevenson's immortal 1886 novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was at first met with skepticism. Surely the days (and nights) of classic horror were long past, and this would be just one more slasher gorefest. Wrong! DR. JEKYLL &

MR. HYDE (2002) is a return to form! Classic horror lives!

Director /writer Mark Redfield cast himself in the challenging and difficult title roles. That he can wear so many hats and still deliver the best performance in the film is a tribute to his versatility and talent. The production shifts the tale from Stevenson's 1886 to 1900. Lawyer Gabriel Utterson (Carl Randolph) is trying to discover what power the ominous Mr. Hyde holds over his friend, Dr. Henry Jekyll. Jekyll is the kindest of men, but his philanthropic ventures haven't won the admiration of Mordecai Carew (R. Scott Thompson), brother of Jekyll's fiancé, Miriam (Kosha Engler). Falsely informed that she does not wish to see him, Jekyll disappears and Hyde appears on the scene, seeking out Claire Cane (Elena Torrez),a fallen woman whom Jekyll earlier treated for cuts inflicted by her violent lover, Jack Little (Robert Leembruggen).

The film is reminiscent of ABC's TV's stylish, late-night telefilms from the seventies, such as the Dan Curtis productions FRANKENSTEIN (1973) and THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1973). Costuming, sound, and set direction are outstanding, particularly on what must have been a small budget. The sets combine actual locations, studio work, and miniatures.

Redfield is outstanding in the lead, and Torrez, Engler, and Alena Wright (as Annie Jackson, Claire's crony) also provide fine work. Some of the minor roles are filled by locals with Cockney accents about as convincing as Dick Van Dyke's in MARY POPPINS (1963), but then, big-budget films also suffer this problem. (Kevin Costner as Robin Hood? Please!)

Alpha Video, best known for its inexpensive public domain titles, has started a New Cinema series for its brand new acquisitions of which DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE is the first. Reproduction is top notch, and the DVD contains a lot of extra features, including a very informative director's commentary, a "Making Of" documentary, deleted scenes, and more.

-Kevin G. Shinnick

BITE ME!

EI Independent Cinema-\$19.99

BITE ME! (2004), the latest of EI Independent Cinema's Shock-O-Rama productions, veers away from the grim landscape of THE SCREAMING DEAD (2003) to offer a tongue-in-cheek retro look at a favorite horror topic—killer bugs. Nasty killer bugs. Bloodsucking killer bugs. Big killer bugs. Written and directed by Brett Piper, the film—unlike so many horror comedies—is actually quite funny, with an endearing, off-the-wall quality all its own.

The Go-Go-Saurus (a Godzilla-like giant model towers over the building) is not the hot spot strip club of days gone by. The crowds are smaller, the take is less, and the strippers are bored or stoned. Club owner Ralph Vivino (Mike Thomas, the scene stealer from 2003's LORD OF THE G-STRINGS) has two

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NEWS HOUND

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The Wicked Stage

Andrew Lloyd Webber has reteamed with his original PHANTOM Michael Crawford for THE WOMAN IN WHITE, a new West End adaptation of novelist Wilkie Collins' 1860 Gothic thriller. The production opened in September under the direction of SUNSET BOULEVARD's Trevor Nunn. London critics lauded Lloyd Webber's score but gave mixed assessments to the book by playwright Charlotte Jones. Crawford—nearly unrecognizable in borderline-grotesque prosthetics as the obese Count Foscoshares the stage with Edward Petherbridge, best known for his televised turn as Lord Peter Wimsey in a trio of 1987 BBC productions.

Crawford's most recent Stateside stage appearance as the fanged, fiendish Count Krolok in DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES (based on Roman Polanski's 1967 film THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS) was an abbreviated one—the Broadway run closed last January after only 56 performances. Vampires seem to have an unpredictable stake on Broad-

THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS flopped on Broadway, flies on DVD.



way—Frank Wildhorn's DRACULA, THE MUSICAL is still flying at press time despite bad reviews, but a planned tuner based on Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat* by pop icons Elton John and Bernie Taupin is rumored to be on permanent hold, despite the announcement of a Fall 2005 debut. DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES' composer/lyricist Jim Steinman's other batty movie-based Broadway project, BATMAN—to be staged by director Tim Burton—is also rumored to have bitten the theatrical dust.

The motion-picture screen continues to be an active source for new stage productions, however, with adaptations in development of AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, MY MAN GODFREY, TOOTSIE, PLEASANTVILLE, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, and EDWARD SCISSORHANDS. Eric Idle's musical SPAMALOT, based on MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL, is set for a Spring 2005 Broadway bow, and Disney's West End staging of MARY POPPINS by producer Cameron Mackintosh opens in December.

Perilous Publications

The creators of last Spring's top-selling horror comic *The Black Forest* have concocted a new illustrated terror tale for Image Comics: *The Wicked West*. (See the illustration on page 23.) Illustrated by Neil Vokes and cowritten by screenwriter/directors Todd Livingston and Robert Tinnell, the new graphic novel swaps the previous title's World War I European setting for the American West of 1870. It's the tale of a high plains drifter who finds himself in a frontier town overrun by vampires. For more information, visit www.thewickedwest.com.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: screen SUPERMAN Christopher Reeve; music legend Ray Charles; pioneering Disney animator Frank Thomas; photographers Eddie Adams and Richard Avedon; au-

thor and broadcaster Bernard Levin; TV news anchor Larry McCormick; disc jockeys Chuck Leonard and Scott Muni; guitarist Johnny Ramone (John Cummings); singers Laura Branigan, Skeeter Davis, Rick James, and Carl Wayne (of The Move); lyricist Fred Ebb; author/composer Eugene Raskin; special effects artist Martin Becker; puppeteer Peter Baird; makeup artist Tom Tuttle; cinematographers Neal Fredericks and David Myers; composers Elmer Bernstein, Jerry Goldsmith, Piero Piccioni, and David Raksin; voice actors Jackson Beck and Danny Dark; film editor Geraldine Peroni; screenwriters Arthur Alsberg, S. Bar-David (Shimon Wincelberg), Joseph Bonaduce, Frank Chase, George Kirgo, Robert Lees, Robert Lewin, and Rod Peterson; producers Lawrence P. Bachmann, Michael Relph, Max J. Rosenberg, and Malcolm Stuart; directors Russ Meyer, Seymour Robbie, Ismael Rodríguez, Daniel Petrie Sr., and Irvin S. Yeaworth Jr.; and actors Acquanetta, Vivian Austin, Joan Barclay, Peter Birrell, Peter Blythe, Caitlin Clarke, Paula O'Hara Coburn, Tim Choate, Rodney Dangerfield, Georgine 'Miss Torso" Darcy, Carlo Di Palma, O. L. Duke, Charles Eaton, Sam Edwards, George "Buck" Flower, Paul "Mousie' Garner, Virginia Grey, Dorothy Hart, Jane Hoffman, Frances Hyland, Frederick Jaeger, Suzanne Kaaren, Colin MacCormack, George Mallaby, Hugh Manning, Portland Mason, Frank Maxwell, Sammy Mc-Kim, J. Edward McKinley, Margo McLennan, Joan Morgan, Jeff Morris, Richard Ney, Glyn Owen, Hildy Parks, Fred Pinkard, Pat Roach, Madeleine Robinson, Eugene Roche, Peggy Ryan, Renée Saint-Cyr, Archie Smith, Lyn Thomas, Lou Walker, Peter Woodthorpe, Howard Keel, and the cinema's iconic scream queens Janet Leigh and Fay Wray.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via email to

SECOND OPINION

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OF THE OPERA (1925), Hammer's THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE (1963), and THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS (1967)if only they can get past the fact that it's not as good as its models and isn't a classic horror picture. Chunks of it don't work and at times it resembles a video game. (There's one fall done by Kate Beckinsale-or her CGI equivalent-that looks like a pinball game as she bounces from here to there to there.) For everyone else, VAN HELSING ought to work as a great lumbering popcorn movie. It's big, loud, fast-moving, and constantly good to look at-as are its lead characters. Individual scenes are breathtaking and, while the story doesn't hold together, parts of it actually manage moments of genuine suspense. As for the gripes that it's not exactly subtle-well, we're talking a Stephen Sommers summer release flick, not "Merchant Ivory Meets the Monsters.

The DVD comes fully equipped with the usual "exclusive special features"—in this instance, a guided tour through Dracula's Castle, a Van Helsing game, and assorted featurettes, including THE LEGEND OF VAN HELSING.

IONATHAN BRECK

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JB: Oh, that's come up in interviews before, believe me! (Laughs) But for the first movie people appreciated the fact that it was brother and sister and they weren't romantically involved, too.

SS: In fact, it's hinted that the boy may in

fact be gay.

JB: That was kind of a fresh dynamic, because it always seems to be that it's some boyfriend and girlfriend on the road. From my perspective, I didn't have a lot of experience in the horror genre. I've been misquoted as having said that I wasn't a fan of the genre, but that's a misprint. What I said was that I didn't have a lot of experience in the horror genre before JEEPERS CREEPERS. I thought it really served me, because I approached this role like any other acting role. I didn't have a preconceived notion-either consciously or subconsciously-of any other performances before me. That really helped me. If you're a huge fan of the genre, you can't help but let things enter into your consciousness about something somebody did in a movie you saw when you were 10.

SS: If there is a JEEPERS CREEPERS 3, will the character be expanded even further?

JB: I think so. There have been talks of a prequel. The creators—Victor and everybody involved with this—are interested in making not just another rehash of the first two movies. They're interested in making a fresh, interesting new movie with a bunch of new things in it. We were all leery of doing the first sequel, because most of the time sequels just don't measure up. I think you can look for more innovations if

we go ahead and do a third movie. It will basically stand on its own. Obviously, a lot of things will be similar, but it will be its own movie with new ideas and it will reveal new things.

SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

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weeks to come up with the money to save his club, otherwise tough-asnails Theresa Razzini (Julian Wells) will take it over lock, stock, and bosoms.

Ah, but Ralph has a sly moneymaking scheme—all he need do is smuggle in some really top quality bio-engineered pot, for which he already has a buyer lined up. Unfortunately, Ralph not only has a buyer, but he also has some mutant spiders that have hidden themselves away inside the crates and are now, thanks to a stripper named Amber (Caitlin Ross), on the loose.

BITE ME!, like Roger Corman's spacy horror comedies of the late fifties (1959's A BUCKET OF BLOOD) and early sixties (1960's THE LITTLE SHOP OF HOR-RORS), marches to its own crackpot tune. One of Go-Go-Saurus patrons is a whacked out DEA agent named Miles McCarthy (John Fidele, in a wonderfully manic performance), who gets shot, abused, and bitten, and finally mutates into a giant animated spider/man hybrid. This monstrosity goes Bugo A Mano with goofball exterminator Terrence "Buzz" O'Reilly (Rob Monkiewicz) and stripper Crystal (EI star Misty Mundae, who revels in kicking-instead of just showing-butt).

The 88-minute film features loads of fright film references and, of course, naked women and lesbian love scenes. Add some incredibly sophisticated stopmotion effects, a car crash, a few strip scenes, and you've got a very entertaining spoof that points a fresh direction for El's Shock-O-Rama.

—David Guffy

BULLDOG DRUMMOND ESCAPES/ BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S SECRET POLICE

Image Entertainment—\$24.99

From Image Entertainment comes a double bill of two of the eight Bulldog Drummond adventures produced by Paramount in the 1930s—BULLDOG DRUMMOND ESCAPES (1937) and BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S SECRET POLICE (1939). The former is the first of the Paramount series, based on the character created by H.C. "Sapper" McNeile, with Ray Milland in only appearance in the role. Milland adds charm to a part best remembered for being played earlier by the peerless Ronald Colman.

The plot finds Captain Hugh Drummond returning to England to lend support to fidgety sidekick Algy Longworth (Reginald Denny), whose wife is with child. Naturally, Drummond winds up doing much more than sitting in a maternity ward—he encounters Phyllis Clavering (Heather Angel, later reunited with Milland in 1962's THE PREMATURE BURIAL), who pretends to faint on the roadside, only to make off

with Drummond's car. In record time, Drummond uncovers a nefarious plot by Norman Merridew (Porter Hall) and the other motley residents of Greystone Mansion to steal Phyllis's inheritance. This lighthearted affair zips by in an uninspired but painless manner, punctuated by expected sneering from Hall as the vandyked villain; the novelty of seeing Andy Hardy's mom, Fay Holden, on the side of evil; and some egregious mugging by Denny as the nitwit comic



relief. Milland, by the way, does <u>not</u> execute any particular escape to speak of, thereby making the title meaningless.

SECRET POLICE is the sixth of the Paramount films. Milland was rightfully deemed too important to stay in a B series, so the part of the intrepid investigator was handed over to John Howard, chosen perhaps because of his connection to Colman, having played his disagreeable brother in LOST HORIZON (1937). He's certainly no match for Colman or Milland, and this Midwesterner's attempt at a British accent leaves much to be desire. To compensate, he's joined by some dependable supporting players, including H.B. Warner as Scotland Yard Inspector Nielson, Elizabeth Patterson as Phyllis's crabby aunt, and, best of all, Leo G. Carroll as a newly hired butler up to no good.

A remake of Fox's TEMPLE TOWER (1930), this entry finds Drummond and Phyllis (Angel) arriving at the captain's newly reopened estate, Rockingham Tower, for their long overdue marriage. A befuddled old professor (Forrester Harvey) shows up to announce that a diary containing a secret code holds the key to a treasure buried somewhere in the catacombs of Rockingham, and the hunt is on. Somehow a dream sequence is worked into the storyline, so we can watch footage from previous Drummond films. (Bulldog's Greatest Hits?) Despite this, the movie only clocks in at 54 minutes, which means the pacing is pretty swift overall. If you can overlook Denny's insufferable pratfalls, this entry is an acceptable way to pass the time and includes a terrific climax involving a subterranean torture chamber.

The Paramount logo does not appear on these DVD editions of the films; instead, the companies upfront are Janus Films and something called Congress Films. The transfers are unspectacular but watchable. Just for the record, Captain Drummond is never once referred to as "Bulldog" in either film.

-Barry Monush



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- •TV interview with Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke
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he master detective Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone) and his faithful cohort Dr. Watson (Nigel Bruce) are back, restored in 35mm by the UCLA Film and Television Archive and digitally remastered. These newly restored versions of the classic films include the period war bond tag. studio logo and credits from its original theatrical release. Filled with ominous shadows and interesting camera angles, the visual beauty of the film in 35mm is stunning.



THE WOMAN IN GREEN (1945)

Four women are murdered and, curiously, all four have been left without their right forefinger. Holmes discovers a web of blackmail and hypnotism unlike anything he has ever seen.

PURSUIT TO ALGIERS (1945)

The King of Ravenia has been assassinated and his son Nikolas is now a marked man. The detective and the good doctor take to the sea in order to safeguard the young heir on his journey from London back to his homeland and throne.

TERROR BY NIGHT (1946)

Lady Margaret's son is found murdered and the 'Star of Rhodesia' has been whisked away. Eccentric and suspicious passengers line the Scotland Express as Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson and Inspector Lestrade (Dennis Hoey) investigate.

DRESSED TO KILL (1946)

Three identical music boxes manufactured by an inmate at Dartmoor Prison are sold to three random collectors at an auction house in London. A female antagonist (Patricia Morison) and her accomplices attempt to recover the music boxes using all means possible, even murder.

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- Footage of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- > Production Notes by Richard Valley
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VOLUME THREE

SHERLOCK HOLMES THE WOMAN IN GREEN

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SHERLOCK HOLMES DRESSED TO KILL







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STARRING BASIL RATHBONE AND NIGEL BRUCE



VOLUME THREE

SHERLOCK HOLMES THE WOMAN IN GREEN

STARRING BASIL RATHBONE NIGEL BRUCE
WITH-HILLARY BROOKE PAUL CAVANAGH HENRY DANIELL
ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY BERTRAM MILLHAUSER
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ROY WILLIAM NEILL

BASIL RATHBONE NIGEL BRUCE SHERLOCK HOLMES IN PURSUIT TO ALGIERS

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY LEONARD LEE
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER HOWARD BENEDICT PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ROY WILLIAM NEILL

SHERLOCK HOLMES TERROR BY NIGHT

STARRING BASIL RATHBONE NIGEL BRUCE
WITH ALAN MOWBRAY RENEE GODFREY DENNIS HOEY
SCREENPLAY BY FRANK GRUBER
ADAPTED FROM A STORY BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER HOWARD BENEDICT
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ROY WILLIAM NEILL

SHERLOCK HOLMES DRESSED TO KILL

STARRING BASIL RATHBONE NIGEL BRUCE
WITH PATRICIA MORISON SCREENPLAY BY LEONARD LEE
ADAPTED BY FRANK GRUBER FROM A STORY BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
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SHERLOCK HOLMES

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VOLUME THREE

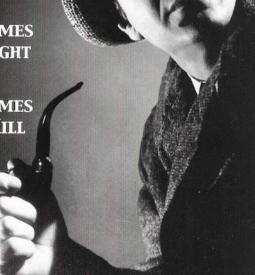
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STARRING BASIL RATHBONE AND NIGEL BRUCE

A MESSAGE FROM THE UCLA FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE



The twelve "modern" Sherlock Holmes films included in this DVD series were originally produced by Universal Pictures sixty years ago, during and just after World War II. Universal's rights expired in the early 1950's, and subsequently the ownership of the films changed hands many times. As a result of this, the storage of the original 35mm nitrate picture and soundtrack negatives and the 35mm nitrate protection master copies made from these negatives was haphazard at best.

Nitrate film is inherently unstable, and many reels of the original Sherlock Holmes negatives deteriorated over the years – the picture became stained and faded, and the film base began to turn sticky and gooey before collapsing into a brownish powder. Fortunately, backup copies on nitrate fine grain master positive film had been made when the films were first produced, but these copies also began to deteriorate over the decades, and today many of the reels of nitrate master positive picture and sound no longer exist.

However, all was not lost because television distributors in the 1960's and 1970's made 35mm and 16mm safety copies of the films on early acetate stock. These copies were flawed in that they lacked the original main and end titles for all of the films in the series, and in addition many of them had only mediocre picture and sound quality. During the past decade, some of these acetate master positive prints and duplicate negatives have become limp and warped because of another type of deterioration known as "vinegar syndrome," so-called because the decaying film gives off a strong odor of acetic acid and smells like salad dressing.

Because large numbers of individual reels of picture and sound of various generations were lost or survive only in a deteriorating state, the quality of the current restorations also varies. In some instances, the original nitrate camera negative is still available intact and the picture quality is excellent; in other cases, the only available elements are copies that are many generations removed from the original. Today, it is possible by means of "wet printing" to eliminate or reduce the appearance of scratches in old and worn films, but many of the Sherlock Holmes elements made years ago were printed "dry" and as a result some blemishes and flaws are photographically built-in to the film.

The current versions of these movies, assembled from materials found in England, France and America, are full length, and include all of the original main and end titles. Even the concluding announcement asking audiences to purchase war bonds on their way out of the theater is there. Though every effort has been made to restore each of the films to the best possible quality, inevitably some parts of the series look and sound better than others because of the ravages of time.



"YOU HOPE TO PLACE ME ON THE GALLOWS. I TELL YOU I WILL NEVER STAND UPON THE GALLOWS. BUT, IF YOU ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN ANY WAY IN BRINGING ABOUT MY DESTRUCTION, YOU WILL NOT BE ALIVE TO ENJOY YOUR SATISFACTION."

-PROFESSOR MORIARTY

THE WOMAN IN GREEN



- 2. THE FINGER MURDERS
- 3. THE WOMAN IN GREEN
- 4. "ATROCITY IN THE EDGEWARE ROAD."
- 5. THE DYING CLUE
- 6. MORIARTY!
- 7. THE EMPTY HOUSE
- 8. THE MESMER CLUB
- 9. GREEN FOR DANGER
- 10. WATERS OF FORGETFULNESS
- 11. THE SUICIDE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES
- 12. END CREDITS

"There are other Moriartys, but none so delectably dangerous as was that of Henry Daniell." wrote Basil Rathbone in his 1962 autobiography In and Out of Character. Daniell was the third and last actor to portray the Napoleon of Crime opposite Rathbone's Great Detective in the Sherlock Holmes films of the 1930s and '40s. George Zucco had played the devilish professor in ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1939), aleefully plotting the crime of the century (the 19th century, this being one of only two films in the series to retain the proper Victorian period) while trading sarcasms with the man from Baker Street. Lionel Atwill was no less ebullient in SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SECRET WEAPON (1942)-and, as was the actor's wont both onscreen and off, considerably more perverse.

In THE WOMAN IN GREEN (1945), Henry Daniell, a graduate of two previous series entries (1942's SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VOICE OF TERROR and 1943's SHERLOCK HOLMES IN WASHINGTON), was rather more casual in his criminality, playing Moriarty as a businessman almost indifferent to his own sinister designs. Daniell had some memorable moments, particularly during a confrontation with Holmes lifted from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem," the 1893 short story in which the two adversaries had perished at the Reichenbach Falls - but it was left mainly to Hillary Brooke, as the viridescent dame of the title, to provide Holmes with a worthy opponent.

"Henry Daniell was a very heartless man," Hillary Brooke remembered in a 1995 interview for Scarlet Street magazine. "I never complained about whether we worked late. That was simply a part of the business. But he kept complaining about working late, and I said, 'If you object so strongly, why don't you do something else?' He wasn't a very nice man. He was cold, and he

was very distant and removed, very much what you saw on the screen."

The future Professor James Moriarty was born in London on March 5, 1894, some four months after "The Final Problem" debuted in The Strand Magazine. Daniell's career took him from the English stage to Broadway and a role opposite the reigning queen of the American theater, Ethel Barrymore. The inevitable next step was the long one from New York to Hollywood, where Daniell made his celluloid bow in the first film version of THE AWFUL TRUTH (1929), as the errant husband played by Cary Grant in the 1937 remake.

Suavely sinister, perpetually haughty, and frigid as a fish-market flounder. Daniell sniffed and sneered his way through such pictures as MADAME X (1937): MARIE ANTOINETTE (1938): THE SEA HAWK (1940): THE GREAT DICTATOR (1940); RANDOM HARVEST (1942); JANE EYRE (1944); THE EGYPTIAN (1954); WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION (1957); and THE NOTORIOUS LANDLADY (1962). His brief forays into horror were memorable. As Dr. Toddy MacFarlane in the Val Lewton production THE BODY SNATCHER (1945), he all but stole the show from top-billed Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, while as Dr. Emil Zurich in THE FOUR SKULLS OF JONATHAN DRAKE (1959), he helped make the film a lowbudget staple of television's "creature features." His friendship with director George Cukor proved professionally advantageous, resulting in small but juicy roles in CAMILLE (1936); HOLIDAY (1938); THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (1940); A WOMAN'S FACE (1941); LES GIRLS (1957); and THE CHAPMAN REPORT (1962). Daniell suffered a fatal heart attack while playing the Queen of Transylvania's chamberlain in Cukor's MY FAIR LADY (1964). His role was assumed by fellow Lewton veteran, Alan Napier, Strangely, both actors, white-haired and mustached, appear in the finished film in the same role.

THE WOMAN IN GREEN furthers the gruesome tradition established by the previous year's THE SCARLET CLAW (death by five-pronged garden weeder) and THE PEARL OF DEATH (shattered

spines courtesy of the Hoxton Creeper). Bertram Millhauser's original screenplay (initially titled INVITATION TO DEATH, and his last for the series) not only drew elements from "The Final Problem," but also pilfered the primary plot device of its 1903 sequel, "The Empty House." For the main narrative, however, Millhauser sought inspiration not from Conan Dovle, but from the true-life atrocities perpetrated in 1888 by the world's most infamous serial killer, Jack the Ripper. In the film, Scotland Yard is baffled by a grim series of "finger murders," in which young women have been killed and mutilated, their right forefingers removed and carried off. (Millhauser's first draft presented the victims as preadolescent girls, but industry censor Joseph Breen would have none of it.) Inspector Gregson (Matthew Boulton. subbing for Dennis Hoey's Inspector Lestrade) seeks Holmes' help, and the trail leads to the beautiful but deadly Lydia Marlowe (Brooke), a vixen with a knack for hypnotism and a partner (Moriarty) who knows how to use that knack to nick potential victims.

As Lydia, Hillary Brooke (born in Astoria, New York, on September 8, 1914) made the last of three appearances in the series. (She'd had the piddling role of a military chauffeur in SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VOICE OF TERROR and was the helpless Sally Musgrave in 1943's SHERLOCK HOLMES FACES DEATH.) Abandoning her Manhattan modeling career in the late 1930s, Brooke had backed into acting almost by accident.

"I went out to Hollywood. I was on my way to Australia. There was a boat strike on, and I thought, 'Well, I guess I should work.' I didn't want to just sit out here. So I went over to RKO one day and walked in and said, 'I would like to do a picture.' Very nice casting director. He said, 'We're doing NEW FACES OF 1937.' I said, 'I would love to be in it.' And that's how I started! Everybody works so hard, and I didn't even have an agent! I didn't have anything!"

Not so - she had a look. Tall, blonde, and patrician, Brooke not only was a superb evildoer (in 1944's MINISTRY OF FEAR, 1946's STRANGE IMPERSONATION, and 1953's INVADERS FROM

THE WOMAN IN GREEN

Sherlock Holmes

MARS, among others), but a perfect foil for such comic duos as Bing Crosby and Bob Hope (1946's ROAD TO UTOPIA) and Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (as an adventuress in 1949's AFRICA SCREAMS, as a pirate in 1952's ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET CAPTAIN KIDD, and as a tall, blonde, patrician neighbor named Hillary Brooke on the 1952 TV season of THE ABBOTT AND COSTELLO SHOW).

"Lou Costello was the worst about not giving you your cue," Brooke recalled. "When I first started to work with him, I called my agent and said, 'I just can't do this! I never get a cue!' He said, 'Well, you just stay with him,' and sure enough, it worked out beautifully. I had an instinct that - you know - now's the time to talk. When we did ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET CAPTAIN KIDD, poor Charles Laughton found it difficult. He came to me one day and said, 'You know, I'm not getting any cues from Lou.' I said, 'Just go along with it and enjoy yourself. Just talk when you think you should.' And the first thing you know, he loved it. He had a wonderful time!"

Brooke had it easier with her many bad-girl roles. "I used to play a lot of villainesses. I rather enjoyed it. Lots of people were cast repeatedly in certain types of roles. If they wanted a villainess or someone to play 'the other woman,' casting directors would say, 'Let's get somebody like Hillary Brooke.' Oh, I played a lot of other women!"

In 1957, Hillary Brooke had a minor role in Alfred Hitchcock's THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, playing her scenes opposite an actor destined to portray Colonel Sebastian Moran in the penultimate entry in the Rathbone/Bruce series (1946's TERROR BY NIGHT). The following year, after appearing on TV's RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE, the actress retired. She died on May 25, 1999.

Lydia Marlowe and Professor Moriarty aren't the only wrongdoers at large in THE WOMAN IN GREEN. The Holmes series had a habit of periodically presenting its criminals in

triads-Giles Conover (Miles Mander), Naomi Drake (Evelyn Ankers), and the Hoxton Creeper (Rondo Hatton) in THE PEARL OF DEATH: Gregor (Rex Evans), Mirko (Martin Kosleck), and Gubec (William "Wee Willie" Davis) in PURSUIT TO ALGIERS (1945); and Hilda Courtney (Patricia Morison), Colonel Cavanaugh (Frederick Worlock), and Hamid (Harry Cording) in DRESSED TO KILL (1946). THE WOMAN IN GREEN offers, for a change, a quartet - Moriarty; Lydia; Crandon, Lydia's maid (Sally Shepherd); and Dr. Simnell (Percival Vivian). Crandon is an ersatz Mrs. Danvers, devoted to Lydia, but Simnell is an altogether unique-and sick-creation. The physician is white-haired, friendly. and given to playing with children's dolls dressed as nurses. He carries a set of very sharp scalpels. He is, in fact, THE WOMAN IN GREEN's version of Jack the Ripper, a killer and mutilator of young women who die only so that their severed forefingers can be used to fuel Moriarty's blackmail plot.

In ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. the Napoleon of Crime alludes to his hated rival as a creature of fixed habits. So, too, is the professor-he graces three films in the series and literally falls from grace in each and every one (though he never does so anywhere near the Reichenbach Falls). THE WOMAN IN GREEN marked his dving swan song, but he left behind a question that nags Sherlockian scholars to this day. Was WOMAN's Moriarty, Henry Daniell, truly preeminent in the role as Rathbone claimed? Or, was it George Zucco or Lionel Atwill? Opinions vary, and will continue to do so, but someone connected with a popular 1961 sci-fi adventure film may have left a clue pointing to his own villain of choice. With wicked good humor, he cast Henry Daniell in VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA-as a character named Dr. Zucco.

IN PURSUIT TO ALGIERS



- 1. **OPEN**
- 2. FISH 'N' CHIPS
- 3. FISHBONE ALLEY
- 4. SITTING DUCK
- 5. ALL AT SEA
- 6. THE GIRL FROM BROOKLYN
- 7. Unexpected Passengers
- 8. A MAN UNGUARDED
- 9. PAYING THE PENALTY
- 10. PARTY POPPER
- 11. THE LAST TRICK
- 12. END CREDITS

PURSUIT TO ALGIERS is the LOVE BOAT of Sherlock Holmes films. It offers a dash of everything - mystery, intrique, romance, comedy, and the occasional musical interlude, all of it taking place on a leisurely cruise (trumpeted in Universal's advertising as "5.000 miles of terror") to Algiers. There are murderous attempts via knife, poison, and bomb. There are new songs ("There Isn't Any Harm in That" and "Cross My Heart" by Everett Carter and Milton Rosen) and old (Robert Burns' "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," set to music by Alexander Hume). Even Nigel Bruce gets to croon the 18th-century folk tune "Loch Lomond." There are startling revelations. ("The late Professor Moriarty was a virtuoso on the bassoon.") What there isn't very much of in PURSUIT TO ALGIERS, regrettably, is "pursuit," but the film has its own peculiar charm, as the runt of the litter so often does. If it's not in the same league as ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1939) or THE SCARLET CLAW (1944), neither is it a waste of time. Besides, if Mr. Moto can take a vacation (as he did in 1939's aptly named MR. MOTO TAKES A VACATION), why can't Sherlock Holmes?

As with the Japanese superspy, Holmes is actually undertaking a dangerous mission, transporting the crown prince of Rovenia home following the assassination of the young man's father, the king. Holmes and his charge are set to travel by plane, but there's no room for the faithful Watson. Arranging to meet his friend en route, the good doctor sets sail on the S.S. Friesland (a vessel cited as one of Holmes' "unrecorded cases" in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1903 tale "The Norwood Builder").

On board, Watson soon learns that the Great Detective's aircraft has crashed in the Pyrenees. (Nigel Bruce plays Watson's devastation at the news most effectively; it's among his finest moments in the series.) Naturally, it isn't long before the duplicitous Holmes shows up hale.

-SHERLOCK HOLMES

hearty, and only briefly apologetic. (Won't poor Watson ever learn? In the Conan Doyle stories, he's fooled into thinking Holmes has perished with Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls, and in 1944's SPIDER WOMAN, he thinks his friend has drowned while on a fishing trip to Scotland.)

Much like ADVENTURES, PURSUIT TO ALGIERS sets up a secondary puzzle to solve. (Holmes does so almost as an afterthought.) Again, it concerns some famous gems-not Britain's crown jewels this time, but the Duchess of Brookdale's emeralds. Unlike the dual plots in the earlier film, though, the two never mesh, and the emeralds serve mainly to cast doubt on characters innocent of any evil design on the prince's life.

Actors Frederick Worlock and Olaf Hytten turn up in the film's early, England-based scenes, but there are fewer regular members of the Holmes stock company along for the ride than one might expect. Morton Lowry (Stapleton in 1939's THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES) plays a mysterious steward and the ubiquitous Gerald Hamer an obvious red herring (he's obvious because Watson suspects him), but Marjorie Riordan (as a skittish songstress from Brooklyn), John Abbott (as another herring), and Leslie Vincent (as, presumably, the prince) are all new to the series. So is the formidable Rosalind Ivan, who had her own cottage industry playing vexatious nags in such pictures as THE SUSPECT and SCARLET STREET (both 1945). In PURSUIT, Ivan plays Agatha Dunham, a lively and annoying traveler. At a party tossed on their last night at sea, she coerces Watson into recounting vet another unrecorded adventure, that of the Giant Rat of Sumatra (mentioned in the 1924 Conan Doyle story "The Sussex Vampire").

Then there's the unholy three who arrive mid-voyage at Lisbon-Gregor (Rex Evans), Mirko (Martin Kosleck), and the mute Gubec (William "Wee Willie" Davis). Davis, a professional wrestler who appeared in nearly 30 films from 1941 (SHADOW OF THE THIN MAN) to 1978 (AMERICAN HOT WAX) makes virtually no impression in PURSUIT. More interesting are Evans and Kosleck, whose characters are clearly based on Kasper Gutman and Joel Cairo, the colorful villains of

Dashiell Hammett's The Maltese Falcon (1930). Gutman and Cairo are homosexuals in both the novel and the 1941 film version of Falcon (where they were immortalized by Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre). PURSUIT's Gregor and Mirko, though, are practically asexual, their gayness only implied by the real-life gender preference of the actors playing the roles.

Among horror buffs, Evans is known primarily as the barrel-bellied, dipper-lipped Vazec, who blows up the dam and washes the Wolf Man and the Frankenstein right out of his hair in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943). Actually, the actor was more than the sum of this part. Born in England on April 13, 1903, Rex Evans was a popular pianist and composer (with lyricist Rowland Leigh) of bawdy songs. Unfortunately, he met with less success when he emigrated to the United States. Chums with director George Cukor, Evans appeared in the latter's CAMILLE (1936, as a pianist); ZAZA (1939): THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (1940): A WOMAN'S FACE (1941): KEEPER OF THE FLAME (1942); ADAM'S RIB (1949); IT SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU (1954); and A STAR IS BORN (1954). (In his 1991 biography George Cukor: A Double Life, Patrick McGilligan writes "... that after viewing several scenes of CAMILLE and seeing the same actor appear-for no logical reason-in several different scenes, Garbo asked Cukor, 'Who is that big man and what part is he playing?' 'That man is Rex Evans,' the director is said to have replied. 'And he's playing the part of a friend who needs a job.'") Evans also popped up regularly at Cukor's all-male Sunday bacchanals, at which the swimming pool was regularly stocked with young Hollywood hopefuls.

In addition to supplementing his income between Cukor gigs as proprietor of an art gallery, Rex Evans found another kindred spirit in Danny Kaye, appearing with the comic in KNOCK ON WOOD (1954), MERRY ANDREW (1958), and ON THE DOUBLE (1961), the last named proving to be Evans' final film. The actor died on April 3, 1969, 10 days short of his 66th birthday.

Planning a trip with his wife to Los Angeles and Hawaii in 1982, film scholar John Brunas checked

PURSUIT TO ALGIERS

the LA telephone directory for listings of actors he admired and found Martin Kosleck, supporting player in such pictures as CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY (1939); FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (1940); THE MAD DOCTOR (1941); THE MUMMY'S CURSE (1944); HOUSE OF HORRORS (1946); SHE-WOLF OF LONDON (1946); THE FLESH EATERS (1964); and THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE (1980). Following several phone calls and an exchange of letters, the Brunases met Kosleck and established a friendship that lasted till the actor's death in 1994. (Kosleck was born 90 years earlier, in Barkotzen, Germany.)

"Martin lived in a nice home in West Hollywood," Brunas recalled. "I was shocked at how frail he looked, though his skin was smooth and he was obviously coloring his hair to appear more youthful. He introduced us to his significant other, an actor named Christopher Drake, and the name immediately rang a bell. I'd been doing some research and found references to plays in which both Martin and Chris Drake appeared, including THE MAD-WOMAN OF CHAILLOT in 1948. I'd also found an old newspaper clipping about a notorious incident that took place in New York. Martin was married to an actress named Eleanora von Mendelssohn. who was also in MADWOMAN, and several months before her death they'd had a knockdown, drag-out fight at which Chris Drake was present. To say they had a falling out would be entirely accurate, because, after Chris left the building, Martin fell out the window! The papers said he'd been adjusting the curtains and slipped, but - reading between the lines - it seemed likelier that his wife had pushed him! He fell two floors and Chris Drake found him lying on the sidewalk. Shortly thereafter, Eleanora died. Supposedly, she used ether to help her sleep and died of an accidental overdose. I never asked, of course, but I couldn't help wondering if it was Martin's revenge."

Interviewer David Del Valle also met Kosleck in the 1980s, and the actor reflected fondly on his late costar, Basil Rathbone. "Basil and I became great friends on the set of THE MAD DOCTOR. We played partners in crime as well as roommates - very avant garde for the time. He and his wife

Ouida gave magnificent parties and all of Hollywood attended them. I was invited until Ouida saw our film together. After that, she was cold and very unfriendly to me. I was very aware of her jealously regarding Basil and he was helpless to intervene. However, by the time we worked on the Holmes film, it was like old times. Basil and I were a team again, even though my part was nothing. I get emotional thinking about how good a friend he was, always trying to get them to give me more lines. I recall telling him not to bother. I was just so glad to be working with my dear friend that the part was of no importance at all."

According to John Brunas, "Martin talked often about how much he idolized Rathbone. He said they had a wonderful reunion on PURSUIT TO ALGIERS. The cast included Leslie Vincent, who played the supposed prince masquerading as Dr. Watson's nephew. Martin and Leslie were living together, and Rathbone disapproved - not because he disapproved of gay relationships, but for quite another reason. Rathbone came up to Martin one day and said, 'Martin, how can you live with someone who has absolutely no talent?"

Leslie Vincent may have lacked acting ability, but he was wise enough to eventually abandon the footlights and focus on business pursuits.

Rathbone struggled in his final years to maintain his wife's lavish lifestyle, appearing in such travesties as HILLBILLYS IN A HAUNTED HOUSE (1967). The bogus crown prince, on the other hand, was a bona fide millionaire by the time of his death on February 1, 2001.

Sherlock Holmes

TERROR BY NIGHT



- 2. THE STAR OF RHODESIA
- 3. ALL ABOARD!
- 4. MURDER ON THE SCOTCH EXPRESS
- 5. WATSON ON THE CASE
- 6. THE MATHEMATICS PROFESSOR
- 7. COLONEL SEBASTIAN MORAN
- 8. STRANGER ON A TRAIN
- 9. LADY ON A TRAIN
- 10. THE TRAINED KILLER
- 11. AN INSPECTOR CALLS
- 12. END OF THE LINE
- 13. END CREDITS

Sebastian Moran was a colonel in Her Maiesty's Indian Army, big-game hunter, card sharp, author of Heavy Game of the Western Himalayas and Three Months in the Jungle. He was second-in-command in James Moriarty's secret society of villains, and a blackguard second only to his professorial superior in the number of times he's turned up in pastiches and adaptations of the canon.

For all of that, Moran is present in only one of Sir Arthur Conan Dovle's Sherlock Holmes adventures ("The Empty House," published by Collier's and The Strand Magazine in 1903), but his name pops up in The Valley of Fear (1914) and the title story of the collection His Last Bow (1917), among other stories. He's also present in spirit in "The Mazarin Stone" (1921), considered by many to be the worst Holmes tale Conan Doyle ever penned. It was adapted by the author from his 1921 one-act play THE CROWN DIAMOND, in which Moran was billed as "an intellectual criminal." For "The Mazarin Stone," though, Moran-already tried and convicted following "The Empty House" - became Count Negretto Sylvius, one of Conan Doyle's less interesting creations.

Nor did "the old shikari" (as Holmes calls him) fare so well in John Gardner's novel The Return of Moriarty (1974); he was dispatched by the professor himself when the Napoleon of Crime got it into his mastermind that the imprisoned Moran would very likely spill some criminal beans. In Carole Nelson Douglas' Irene at Large (1992) and Castle Rouge (2002), the murderous reprobate matched wits with a woman capable of outsmarting even the "unbeatable" Sherlock Holmes: Irene Adler. Needless to say, he finished rather badly.

On film, Moran showed his scowling mug in 1931's THE SLEEPING CARDINAL (played by Louis Goodrich), 1935's THE TRIUMPH OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (Wilfred Caithness), and 1937's SILVER BLAZE (Arthur Goullet), all three starring Arthur Wontner as the Great Detective. The character also appeared in 1921's THE EMPTY HOUSE

(Sidney Seaward), 1929's THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (Donald Crisp), and, of course, TERROR BY NIGHT (1946), the next to last film in the longrunning series starring Basil Rathbone as Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. John H. Watson.

By the time it got around to Colonel Sebastian Moran, the Rathbone/Bruce series had run Professor Moriarty into the ground. In fact, the series had run the ground into Professor Moriarty three times! First, he fell from the Tower of London (1939's ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES). then through a trap door (1942's SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SECRET WEAPON), and finally from an apartment-house ledge (1945's THE WOMAN IN GREEN).

The series demanded fresh blood, the kind that hadn't already been splattered all over the payement. Moran was called into service, but with a twist, TERROR BY NIGHT's Colonel Sebastian Moran isn't Colonel Sebastian Moran. He's traveling in disguise. And, if you don't want to learn his identity before watching the film, we're pulling into your station right now. Read no further.

The movies have carried on a love affair with locomotives ever since THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY (1903), considered the first true narrative film. What better way to put the motion in motion pictures than to set a story aboard an express streaking through the countryside? While comedians put them to often brilliantly destructive use (Buster Keaton in 1927's THE GENERAL, The Marx Brothers in 1940's GO WEST), trains lent themselves especially well to tales of mystery and suspense-in other words, to those provinces presided over by such as Agatha Christie, Ian Fleming, Alfred Hitchcock, and Arthur Conan Dovle.

Though Conan Doyle's "The Bruce-Partington Plans" (1908) contains the closest railroad ties, trains figure in a number of canonical adventures and one non-canonical episode of particular note. In 1898, during the period in which Holmes and Moriarty were both presumed dead at the foot of the Reichenbach Falls, Conan Doyle penned "The Missing Special," its title referring to a train that steams out of Liverpool and promptly, completely disappears. Held responsible for the vanished

special is "one of the acutest brains in England" who else but Moriarty? - and offering the newspapers a solution to the puzzle (an incorrect one, as it transpires) is an "amateur reasoner of some celebrity." One who plays the violin, no doubt!

Agatha Christie's Belgian sleuth, Hercule Poirot, answered the "All aboard!" in THE MYSTERY OF THE BLUE TRAIN (1928) and MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (1934), the latter filmed in 1974 with Albert Finney as Poirot. Another Poirot mystery, THE ABC MURDERS (1936, and filmed again in 1966 as THE ALPHABET MURDERS with Tony Randall), centered on a serial killer who leaves behind the ABC Railway Guide at the scene of his crimes. For her part, Miss Jane Marple learned what Mrs. McGillicuddy saw when she took the 4:50 from Paddington in 1957. (Filmed in 1961 as MURDER, SHE SAID, the screen version had Miss Marple herself, in the formidable figure of Margaret Rutherford, take to the rails.)

The film versions of lan Fleming's James Bond books rarely bear much resemblance to his original stories, but a train figures prominently in both FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE (1963) and its 1957 source novel. Trains can be also spotted in LIVE AND LET DIE (1973) and THE SPY WHO LOVED ME (1977).

Alfred Hitchcock, The Master of Suspense began working on the railroad as early as 1932 with the minor NUMBER SEVENTEEN. He was soon on the right track with THE 39 STEPS (1935), SECRET AGENT (1936), and THE LADY VANISHES (1938), which introduced the comic characters of Charters and Caldicott, cricket-crazed Britishers played to perfection by Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne. So popular were Charters and Caldicott that they hopped another, non-Hitchcockian express for the 1940 sequel NIGHT TRAIN TO MUNICH. (Charters and Caldicott returned twice more, in 1941's CROOK'S TOUR and 1943's MILLIONS LIKE US.)

Hitchcock himself continued to feature trains in his films, using them to superb effect in SHADOW OF A DOUBT (1943), NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959), and, most famously, STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1951).

With Hitchcock very likely its primary source

TERROR BY NIGHT

Sherlock Holmes

"Obviously Hitchcock's THE LADY VANISHES inspired the author of the script," opined Bosley Crowther in The New York Times), TERROR BY NIGHT is a strong entry in the Holmes series and surprisingly so, since it comes quite late in the game. Pulp-fiction writer Frank Gruber, like Bertram Millhauser before him, had the happy knack of incorporating bits and pieces of the canon into his screenplay. TERROR BY NIGHT begins when Holmes and Watson are engaged to safeguard the Star of Rhodesia, a priceless diamond belonging to Lady Margaret Carstairs (Mary Forbes). on a journey - a "one way ticket to death," as Universal publicity had it-from London to Edinburgh. (The Star has a bloody history, much like the titular gem of Conan Doyle's 1892 story "The Blue Carbuncle" and the Borgia Pearl of 1904's "The Six Napoleons.") Along for the ride are Inspector Lestrade (Dennis Hoey, making his last appearance in the series) and an old army chum of Watson's, Major Duncan-Bleek (Alan Mowbray).

Before long, Roland Carstairs (Geoffrey Steele) is murdered and the diamond presumably stolen. Suspicion falls on Lady Margaret, Professor William Kilbaine (Frederick Worlock), Mr. and Mrs. Shallcross (Gerald Hamer and Janet Murdoch), and Vivian Vedder (Renee Godfrey), the last named accompanying her mother's coffin to its final resting place. In truth, the coffin has a false bottom (lifted from 1911's "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax") concealing Sands (Skelton Knaggs), a weasely killer who not only has murdered Carstairs (with the infamous airgun of "The Empty House"). but comes perilously close to handing Lestrade that fatal one-way ticket. Behind it all, Holmes suspects, is Colonel Sebastian Moran, "the most sinister, ruthless, and diabolically clever henchman of our late and unlamented friend, Professor Moriarty." He's right, of course. Again, as in SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VOICE OF TERROR (1942), the culprit turns out to be someone masquerading as one of Watson's cronies. Major Duncan-Bleek is really Sebastian Moran. British character actor Alan Mowbray (born in London on August 18, 1896) is probably best remembered today as the unctuous but faithful manservant Wilkins in TOPPER (1937) and TOPPER TAKES A

TRIP (1939). Whether comforting scatterbrained Clara Topper (Billie Burke) or contending with banker Cosmo Topper (Roland Young) and his ghostly companions (Constance Bennett and Cary Grant), Mowbray remained cool and collected, delivering the last line of dialogue ("Bless our happy home!") in both films.

Adept at comedy, particularly when he was playing servants, ham actors, or con artists. Mowbray earned laughs in such pictures as ROMAN SCANDALS (1933): THE NIGHT LIFE OF THE GODS (1935 and, like the Topper films, based on a comic novel by Thorne Smith): MY MAN GODFREY (1936): NEVER SAY DIE (1939, in which he performed with Bob Hope an early version of the routine that later became the "pellet with the poison" sequence in 1956's THE COURT JESTER): THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE (1940): MERTON OF THE MOVIES (1947); ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE KILLER, BORIS KARLOFF (1949); MA AND PA KETTLE AT HOME (1954); and AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (1956). Dramatically, he excelled in ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1931, as George Washington); THE HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD (1934); CHARLIE CHAN IN LONDON (1934); MARY OF SCOTLAND (1936): I WAKE UP SCREAMING (1941); MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (1946); CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE (1947); and THE KING AND I (1956). Of special interest to Sherlockians were his turns as Colonel Gore-King in SHERLOCK HOLMES (1932, with Clive Brook in the title role) and as Inspector Lestrade in A STUDY IN SCARLET (1933. with Reginald Owen as Holmes). The actor died on March 25, 1969.

An interesting footnote: among Alan Mowbray's final films was Hitchcock's THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1956), in which he played Val Parnell, one of a small group of theatrical well-wishers that included, in the role of Jan Peterson, another of Professor Moriarty's minions-Hillary Brooke, better known as THE WOMAN IN GREEN.

DRESSED TO KILL



- 1. **OPEN**
- 2. MADE IN DARTMOOR
- 3. AN IDIOTIC BURGLARY
- 4. "THIS IS MURDER!"
- 5. AN UNSCRUPULOUS WOMAN
- 6. THE HUNTERS HUNTED
- 7. THE BANK OF ENGLAND PLATES
- 8. NAME THAT TUNE
- 9. VARIATIONS ON A THEME
- 10. VARIETIES OF TOBACCO
- 11. A SCANDAL IN BAKER STREET
- 12. HOUSE CALL
- 13. END CREDITS

"Heightened mystery is added by the fact that the title has nothing to do with the story and, though probably no great loss . . . remains inexplicable to the end." Thus spake The New York Times on May 5, 1946.

It's practically mandatory when discussing DRESSED TO KILL (1946), the last film in the Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce series of Sherlock Holmes adventures produced by 20th Century Fox and Universal Pictures, to proclaim the title as meaningless. Such, however, is not the case. The title may pass without explanation in the story itself, but its meaning is hardly a mystery. Plainly, it refers to the character of Hilda Courtney (Patricia Morison), seen throughout most of the film in the finest furs and clothes that Universal's limited budget could offer. Mrs. Courtney is the iconic femme fatale, luring guileless men - and very nearly the Great Detective himself - to their doom. She also likes to play dress-up, masquerading as an old charwoman in the course of her criminal escapades.

Perhaps the title is considered pointless due to its overuse. It had already served as the title of a 1928 gangster film with Edmund Lowe and Mary Astor, and was again pressed into service a mere five years before the Holmes film, for a Michael Shayne mystery starring Lloyd Nolan. In 1979, the title was used in the telefilm SHE'S DRESSED TO KILL, concerning a string of fashion-model murders. DRESSED TO KILL popped up again in 1980, for a Brian de Palma thriller starring Michael Caine as a murderous transvestite. (The Holmes film, incidentally, was tediously rechristened SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SECRET CODE in England.)

DRESSED TO KILL's original title, also judged inexplicable, was PRELUDE TO MURDER, and again the connection seems so self-evident that even Dr. Watson could deduce its meaning. "Prelude" is a musical term, of course, and melody drives the events of Frank Gruber's original treatment, from

-SHERLOCK HOLMES

which Leonard Lee fashioned his screenplay.

Appropriating the basic plot mechanics of Sir

Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Dancing Men" (1903)

and the film based on it (1942's SHERLOCK

HOLMES AND THE SECRET WEAPON), and

combining them with the elements from Conan

Doyle's "The Six Napoleons" (1904) and its series

entry (1944's THE PEARL OF DEATH), Gruber and

Lee substituted three music boxes for the plaster

busts of the Little Corporal and a coded message

of musical notes for terpsichorean stick figures.

The result - inevitably - was derivative, but Conan Doyle himself had often recycled his stories. (What is 1924's "The Three Garridebs." if not 1891's "The Red-Headed League?") Furthermore, the scenarists exhibited cleverness and a knowledge of the canon by choosing music as their motif. Sherlock Holmes is not only a devotee of fine music, after all, but also a talented amateur violinist and (as Watson tells us in "The Red-Headed League") "a composer of no ordinary merit." He's a man who will briefly set aside an investigation to attend a concert by violinist Pablo de Sarasate at the St. James' Hall (again, in "The Red-Headed League"). And the only woman for whom he holds a high regard (other than Mrs. Hudson, of course) is the beguiling adventuress and prima donna of the Imperial Opera of Warsaw -Irene Adler, introduced in "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891), the very first short story to feature the world's first consulting detective.

None of this could have been accidental on Gruber and Lee's part. Indeed, when we first discover Holmes and Watson in reflective mood at the beginning of DRESSED TO KILL, they're discussing the late Miss Adler-the woman, as Holmes calls her - and the recent publication of the good doctor's latest literary effort, "A Scandal in Bohemia," in The Strand Magazine. Later, Hilda Courtney adopts Holmes' "scandalous" trick of using a smoke bomb to force someone (in this case, Watson) to reveal the hiding place of a valuable item. In "Scandal," the item is a compromising photograph of Irene Adler with Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismond von Ormstein, the hereditary King of Bohemia: in DRESSED, it's one of the music boxes.

Though Mrs. Courtney holds no exalted place in Sherlock Holmes' mind or heart, the actress who played her could easily have essayed the role of the Warsaw prima donna. Born of theatrical parents in New York City on March 19, 1915. Ursula Eileen Patricia Augustus Frasier Morison (known professionally as Patricia Morison) studied dance with Martha Graham, singing with Richard Borchert, and understudied Helen Hayes in the 1935 Broadway play VICTORIA REGINA. Morison was offered a contract with Paramount in 1938. but never had much luck in Hollywood, invariably finding herself relegated to minor roles in major pictures (1943's THE SONG OF BERNADETTE. 1945's WITHOUT LOVE, 1947's SONG OF THE THIN MAN) or major roles in minor pictures (1943's CALLING DR. DEATH, 1947'S TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS). A gifted singer, she finally achieved stardom as Lilli Vanessi in the original Broadway production of Cole Porter's KISS ME, KATE (1948). introducing such now classic standards as "So in Love" and "Wunderbar." (Morison was trained for the show's Shakespearean scenes by veteran character actress Constance Collier, in much the same manner that Collier, as Catherine Luther. trained the young actress played by Katharine Hepburn in the 1937 film STAGE DOOR.) Though she never again originated such a classic character, Morison's success continued with stage productions of THE KING AND I. KISMET, THE MERRY WIDOW, and SONG OF NORWAY.

Lest there be any doubt that DRESSED TO KILL owes a substantial debt to "A Scandal in Bohemia," one need only note one of the story's best-loved dialogue exchanges:

"I think that I had better go, Holmes."

"Not a bit, Doctor. Stay where you are. I am lost without my Boswell."

Holmes refers to James Boswell, bosom friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson and author of the two-volume The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D (1791). Like Watson, Boswell was a keen chronicler of his companion's adventures and something of a ladies' man, though not so circumspect a one as the good doctor. (Watson married and settled down; Boswell was a familiar figure to the prostitutes in St. James' Park, contracting

DRESSED TO KILL

gonorrhea 17 times in 30 years of unbridled sexual activity.) Surely it cannot be coincidental, given the reference to Boswell in "A Scandal in Bohemia," that the entire climax of DRESSED TO KILL transpires in Universal's recreation of an actual historic site - the London home of Dr. Samuel Johnson. It is there that Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, responding to congratulations from Inspector Hopkins (Carl Harbord) on solving the case and catching the felons, speak the last lines they were ever to share on the screen:

"It's entirely due to Dr. Watson. He gave me the clue when he mentioned Dr. Samuel Johnson."

"I don't think I could have done it entirely without Mr. Holmes' help, you know."

Fade out. The end. Tragically, the primary architect of the Holmes series - leastwise, at Universal - never reaped the benefits of his artistry. Producer/director Roy William Neill, in the picture business since 1916 and responsible for such minor classics as THE NINTH GUEST (1934), THE BLACK ROOM (1935), FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), and THE BLACK ANGEL (1949), was himself visited by the black angel some five months after the release of the final Holmes feature, dying in England of a heart attack on December 14, 1946.

Forever associated with the character of Dr. John H. Watson, Nigel Bruce continued in films until October 8, 1953, when he, too, succumbed to heart failure. Among his final credits: THE TWO MRS. CARROLLS (1947), JULIA MISBEHAVES (1948), Charles Chaplin's LIMELIGHT (1952), and the 3-D adventure BWANA DEVIL (1952).

The often unsung Mary Gordon, Mrs. Hudson in both the film and radio series, continued in movies until 1950's WEST OF WYOMING and THE FILE ON THELMA JORDAN. She died 13 years later on August 23, 1963 at age 81.

When DRESSED TO KILL went before the cameras, Basil Rathbone had already decided to abandon Sherlock Holmes, both onscreen (Universal held the rights to the character through 1949) and over the radio. (Rathbone and Bruce had chalked up over 200 half-hour episodes; Bruce, whose friendship with Rathbone was sorely

tried by his costar's desertion, soldiered on for 39 more stories with Tom Conway as Holmes.) Like Conan Doyle before him, Rathbone felt that the Great Detective kept him from better things. He was wrong.

Rathbone had some late success on the Broadway stage (in 1947's THE HEIRESS and 1958's J.B.), but the non-Holmesian highlights of his career (1935's ANNA KARENINA, CAPTAIN BLOOD, A TALE OF TWO CITES, and DAVID COPPERFIELD; 1936'S ROMEO AND JULIET; 1938'S THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD and IF I WERE KING; 1940'S THE MARK OF ZORRO) were, for the most part, behind him, including the horror-tinged roles (1939'S SON OF FRANKENSTEIN and TOWER OF LONDON; 1941'S THE MAD DOCTOR and THE BLACK CAT) he so disliked.

Ahead lay parodies of his swashbucklers (1954's CASANOVA'S BIG NIGHT and the admittedly superior 1956 romp, THE COURT JESTER); more horrors (1956's THE BLACK SLEEP, 1962's TALES OF TERROR, 1964's THE COMEDY OF TERRORS); a sheepish return to Holmes on Broadway (1953's SHERLOCK HOLMES); and television (a failed pilot in 1950 and the 1953 SUSPENSE episode "The Adventure of the Black Baronet"). He also appeared in such end-of-the-road drive-in fodder as GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI (1966) and HILLBILLYS IN A HAUNTED HOUSE (1967).

Basil Rathbone's most recent film credit appeared in 1986, some 19 years after his death (a heart attack) on July 21, 1967. One of his old radio performances had been commandeered for the animated feature THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE. The Disney studio needed a voice for the silhouetted character of Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

— Richard Valley is the publisher of Scarlet Street magazine (www.scarletstreet.com) and also a playwright whose comedies have been produced in New York, Boston, Minneapolis, and other cities.







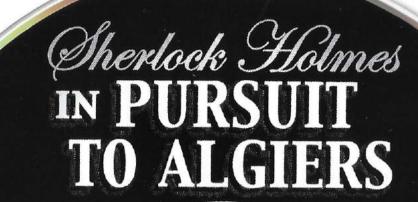




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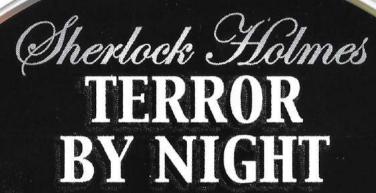








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